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The Last Photo Sent by Wallace to his Mother, about Two Months Before his Death.

# Wallace Reid

## HIS LIFE STORY

AS RELATED BY

HIS MOTHER

BERTHA WESTBROOK REID

SORG PUBLISHING COMPANY
NEW YORK, N. Y.
1923

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*By*

BERTHA WESTBROOK REID

# PREFACE

So many conflicting things have been spoken and written of my beloved son, WALLACE REID, that I feel sure he ardently wishes me to have a little "talk" with those he so dearly loved, and who as dearly loved him,—his much loved "public", the world—all of whom, were to him, his trusted friends and brothers.

I have had so many requests for photographs and incidents of his childhood,—so many—that no matter how much pleasure I would take in gratifying each and every request from the world of those who love him, for the clean joy he gave them, and who love him even more deeply in his hour of sacrifice,—but I regret I cannot possibly reach them individually. However, I am trying to reach every one of these, by means of this little story and its pictures.

No one can better understand than his mother, the sorrow and deep regret that she could not be with her dearly beloved and only child in his hour of pain and of his going away.

Surely you would like to know him in his baby-hood, his boy-hood and his young man-

hood—for he travelled no further—when the call to "ATTENTION" came. You know now that he responded with signal courage, that he never wavered nor looked back, but pushed bravely on, into the Valley of the Shadow, nor did he pause, but passed on through the Grim Portal of Mystery and stood before the Infinite General over all of Eternity's Battles. "Here."—"Well done, thou good and faithful."

I, his mother, am proud that he did not wait for an hour of adversity, but took up this self imposed battle, at the very zenith of his fame, his prosperity and his allotted span. For this greatest victory of all, he laid down his life. He simply refused defeat. Thereby, his marvelous strength of character is irrefutably proven.

To me, his mother, he is both martyr and hero. I weep for his martyrdom and glory in his high heroism!!

These are the flowers gathered from his mother's heart and lovingly, sorrowfully laid upon the altar of his memory.

BERTHA WESTBROOK REID.

New York City,
January, 1923.

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DEAR READER:

*Just as this book goes to press, it is with unlimited pride and joy that I can announce to you, as evidence of the high esteem in which my son was held, both as gifted artist and for his fine, clean manhood, that "The Famous Players - Lasky Corporation" with whom he was so long and so pleasantly associated, loving him like a son and a brother, will erect at Hollywood, to this ideal young American, a great bronze statue.*

*I know you will rejoice with me over this splendid and enduring Memorial to his honor!*

*HIS PROUD MOTHER*

*February 28, 1923*

Wallace's Last Visit to his Boyhood Home, with his Mother.

# CHAPTER I.

## HIS PARENTAGE.

An American pure and simple, was Wallace Reid. By blood, through every branch of his family tree, on both his father's and mother's side, he was an American.

On his father's side, Wallace's great-great grandfather was Lieut. Col. James Reid of the Revolutionary War. His great-grandfather, John Reid, settled on farm lands between Cedarville and Xenia, Ohio. He was brother of Robert Reid, father of the late Whitelaw Reid, Minister Plenipotentiary to France and to the Court of St. James. He was the first of our Ambassadors to address the French in their own language. He owned the New York Tribune, having won the confidence of its famous old owner, Horace Greeley.

Wallace's father, James Halleck Reid, turned to newspaper writing in his boyhood. His first advancement came as a reporter on the Cincinnati Times Star, under Charles P. Taft, owner, and brother of former President William Howard Taft, at present Supreme Court Judge. Both Judge Taft and his brother were personal friends of Wallace's father, who, at the height of his fame, numbered many other notables as his friends; among them, John Hay, William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

Wallace's grand-father, Dr. Hugh M. Reid, was Professor of Dentistry in the Ohio Dental College. Later, he occupied the same chair in the University of Minnesota. After the death of his wife, a Kentuckian of Revolutionary stock, he retired to a farm near Red Bank, New Jersey, where he died.

Wallace's father was author of many successful plays, among them "Human Hearts," "The Night Before Christmas," "The Confession," "The Peddler", "The Prince of the World," "At the Old Cross Roads" and other dramatic pastorals. He died two years ago.

On his mother's side, Wallace's great-great grandfathers, both, cultivated large plantations in Virginia with the work of numerous slaves, in the days of the old Dominion. His maternal great-great grand-mother, in particular, "belonged" to some of the proudest families in those proud old days. In fact, both sides of the Virginia stock, numbered among them such names as the Dabneys, Farrows, Jennings, Strothers—"names to conjure with." His mother's grand-father was, for many years, an honored Judge on the bench in Macoupin County, Illinois and declined to be sent to the United States Senate, preferring the happiness of home and family. He was the owner of many farms, numbering thousands of acres,—also grist and flour mills. Their daughter, Mary Virginia, married Col. "Harry" Westbrook of St. Louis, formerly of New York City, who liked to tell of days when corn fields flourished at Twenty-third Street. Two brothers of his grandmother were ministers in the pulpit; one of whom, now retired, enjoys good health, at the age of ninety-

four. There is also a sister, ninety-two, so that his maternal grand-mother, "sweetheart Virginia" as Wallace called her, is a mere slip of a girl—only eighty-four and enjoying the same good health. His grandfather reached the age of eighty-two.

Wallace frequently boasted that he would live to be one hundred years old, and to me, the boast seemed entirely within reason. Alas for reasonable expectancies, and unreasonable realities!

Wallace's mother was reared and educated in St. Louis, where she enjoyed two social seasons, when she became a member of the old McCullough Club for amateur theatricals. The Dean of our American Playwrights, Augustus Thomas, was a member of that club also, and she had the honor of appearing with the distinguished author in one of his early playlets, "The Last Call." Then followed a pretentious historic play in blank verse at the then, high class, Grand Opera House. The favorable newspaper comments determined her upon an histrionic career with Shakesperian roles as the shining and distant goal. "Ignis fatuus" or the "foot of the rainbow" have been no less elusive. If ever she is to shine in "propria persona," the faithful little god of Hope, smiling rogue that he is, whispers the theory of reincarnation upon which to pin such unrequited ambitions. Then plain visaged Reason tugs at Better Judgment, prompting that those ambitions have been fulfilled in the high artistic success and fair fame, attained by her dear boy, Wallace—and she is content.

# CHAPTER II.

## HIS BIRTH AND BABYHOOD.

Wallace's father and myself were married in Kansas City at the home and by a Southern Methodist Episcopal minister. We went to Chicago, thence to Cincinnati, where he wrote and we produced, one of his earliest pastoral plays, "A Home-spun Heart." This was played for some time. Later, we went to my father's home in St. Louis. Our fortunes carried us into the Northern cities. Thence into Minneapolis. There we appeared together in "Two Orphans," he playing Jacques Frochard and I the blind Louise. The success of this role inspired Mr. Reid to write a blind girl as the heroine of his play, "A Daughter of the Confederacy," which saw many years of success under varying auspices, having been converted later into a stellar vehicle for Stella Mayhew, as the faithful Southern mammy. From that time on, we never played in any plays or companies but our own and he never wrote a failure.

The time came when I knew that the great responsibility of a human soul-flower, an incarnated spiritual entity out of the fathomless mystery of No-where, was to be entrusted to my care, and the sacredness of that trust, was ever present with me from that time—

months before Wallace came to me—until the terrible and tremendous day when he went from me.

Every single day found its conscience imposed duties performed, gladly, happily. An hour each. was devoted to the most conscientious efforts to draw and paint good pictures, to practice the best class of music within my abilities, to write the best original prose of which I was capable, to healthful exercises and the bath, to the reading of good, clean literature and to religious thought and study, and I surrounded myself with many pictures of beautiful children, which I frequently intently studied. In short, I was a believer in the immeasurable power of pre-natal influence.

Wallace was born in St. Louis, Missouri, April 15th, 1892. He weighed eleven and three-quarter pounds and was a perfect specimen of baby-hood. His eyes were large, bright and dark blue, like dewy violets, his skin was fair, his cheeks and lips as red as roses, and his hair was so flaxen that we called him "Cotton-top." That was his reason for signing himself "Wallace Cotton-top" on the very last photo of himself he sent to me. He learned the words so dear to parents, "Mamma" and "Papa" at the early age of seven months.

About that time, business took us to Minneapolis, where the famous actor, Edmund Collier, father of our equally famous comedian, William Collier, called upon us, looking for a starring vehicle. The play "Human Hearts" was written to order for him; but Mr. Collier was destined never to play the role he liked so well.

We were stopping with Wallace's doting grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. Reid, whose pleasure it was to remove his little tub to the living room, where he was given his daily bath in state. His two devoted aunts, Mrs. Clements and Mrs. Levering, made special pilgrimages daily, to witness his solemnly puzzled rosy face, as he would grasp firmly a handful of water, bringing it to the surface—oh, so cautiously—opening his chubby fist, and when he saw nothing, his look of utter astonishment was very amusing to all.

He learned to talk early and increased his vocabulary rapidly.

We travelled more or less at this time, and it was very difficult to refuse strangers, who constantly flattered his proud parents, by seeking to "borrow" him while on the train. We came to New York City. I would take him into old Madison Square for his daily airing, where a conspicuous figure of those days, George Francis Train, known as "Citizen Train," would coax him away from the grass to his bench, where the brilliant man would find the little fellow immensely entertaining. You see he was destined to be beloved from the very beginning.

About this time, his father and myself were specially engaged for a revival of "The Phoenix," in which I played Dolly Noble's role. Wallace was taken to the matinee by his nurse. When I came upon the stage as the little flower girl—much to the delight of the audience—Wallace shouted gleefully, "Oh, there's my mamma!"

## CHAPTER III.

### HIS CHILDHOOD.

About this time, "Human Hearts" was produced under the management of Henry C. Miner, with Wallace's parents in the stellar roles. None were more interested than baby Wallace, flitting busily about the dark stage and empty auditorium in his white dress, like a small ray of pale sunshine. In a few rehearsals, we were astonished to find that he knew every line. This play was one of the most lucrative and long lived dramas by an American playwright. From this time on, every play his father wrote, proved successful, and they were many. So that there were ample means for every opportunity and luxury that any child could enjoy. Wallace never knew anything but plenty from the cradle up; and every advantage that prosperity could give, was always his—and I am very grateful that they were.

He dearly loved to hear books read aloud to him, long before he had learned to read,—such books as "Scottish Chiefs," for he greatly admired the character of the famous Sir William Wallace. He also loved Marie Corelli's "Barabbas." He was permitted to take the train alone out to a great uncle's farm. In the station, he went to the news stand,—"I want Puck and

Judge for my light reading, and give me 'Barabbas' for my 'bestantial.' "

One day, we took an excursion steamer, running out in the open ocean to Long Branch, New Jersey. It was very rough. The roses faded from Wallace's cheeks and lips, and he slipped to the floor. He leaned his flaxen head against the post and with despair in his big blue eyes said,—"Please stop this tippy old boat so we can get off. I am so 'mis-a-bul'!!! " Poor child, he was *so* sea-sick!

His ardent love of music showed itself in babyhood. Before the age of two, when things went wrong with him, which moved him either to anger or tears—I could go to the piano and begin to play, and he would come in and climb up in the nearest chair, and his troubles would be completely forgotten. Music was the effective mode of correction, prior to the flowering of the little mind into the age of reason, which latter method, he loved so well.

Wallace was an artist of no mean ability, both in oils and water colors. I have a small water color sketch from his brush,—not a copy, but strictly original—done by him, at the early age of eight years, which speaks for itself, promising an enviable place in the world of art.

He spent some months with my mother in St. Louis when he was a child, and at times we were away on business, when he would be left in his grandmother's charge. He always added to his prayers, the request that the dear Lord should "make me a good boy." One night after a day of especially numerous childish

mis-demeanors, he made the usual request, when suddenly he said,—"Now Lord, I've asked you so many times to make me a good boy—why don't you do it?" Again one night he prayed, "Please, dear Lord, make me like Sir William Wallace". After his prayer, he turned, saying, "Aunt Virginia, don't you think he is a good character to emulate?" He was not yet in trousers.

During this period, the devastating St. Louis cyclone occurred. The chimneys were first blown off the house and then both large bay windows were blown in, just as his grandmother was struggling to get through the house and into the cellar with him. As the windows crashed in, my mother shielding him with her body, the child fell to his knees, praying aloud to the Heavenly Father to save them. A little child's prayer was answered, for not one of the family was hurt.

One day he had been reprimanded severely by his grandmother, and he, in reprisal, pulled up some vines she had planted. She knew nothing of this, however. Finally, of his own volition, he brought a switch, saying,—"grandma, here is a switch, for I have been a bad boy. I pulled up your vines because you scolded me." Needless to say the switch was not used. But he stood ready to take his punishment, even inviting it—just as he did so recently—self-inflicted punishment for the sake of self-conquest, and as we all know, he stood by his colors and gave his life rather than retreat. This signal act of unfaultering courage was entirely consistent with his childish ideals.

About this time his imagination, the fabric out of which authors build, grew so vivid that he would get up in the small hours of the night and sit by the window watching what he thought were real people, disporting themselves in the moonlight, out upon the lawn and among the trees and shrubbery. Whoever of the family discovered him would listen to what he saw. Then he would be perfectly satisfied to go back to bed and to sleep.

Children of his own age did not understand him, so he preferred mostly the companionship of grown-ups, especially in my father's home, where reading aloud was the nightly custom.

He was kaleidoscopic,—as the clock went round and round,—the design and coloring constantly changed. Consequently many people had no conception whatever of the fine-ness of the real man down in the calms beneath the restless ebb and flow of the surface.

Wallace at Four, at Thirteen, and at Eighteen, with his Mother.

# CHAPTER IV.

## IN THE HARBOR OF HOME.

We took an apartment on West End Avenue and afterwards leased one on One Hundred and sixteenth Street, near Columbia University, over-looking Morningside Park. In fact, at that time, the view was virtually uninterrupted in every direction. We bought a country place upon a hillside, at Highlands, New Jersey, where there was a far view of the picturesque Shrewsbury River and the broad Atlantic, for which reason we called it "Glory View." We gravitated between these two for some years, except as new productions carried us to other cities.

Strange to say, Wallace learned to swim in the Hudson River, where he would go bathing with some boys of the neighborhood. One day a crowd of boys concluded that it was time he knew how to swim so they pushed him over-board and ran, leaving him to sink or swim. Needless to say, he *swam!*

During this period, he was confirmed in the Episcopalian faith, by Reverend Hadley, son of the President of Yale University. Wallace possessed a deep religious vein which was frequently coming into evidence. However, he asked many questions, for his processes of thought were logical and he was never satisfied until he had received, what appealed to him,

as logical answers. He tried to think things out for himself after his own fashion; so that he was original in thought as well as logical. The first Christmas present he ever made to me, from some small earnings of his own—for he wished it to be *his* gift—was a small testament, scrawled on the fly leaf, "To Mamma, with love from Baby," which I have always carried with me and is my dearest treasure.

In the city he haunted the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts and similar places of interest, and good music drew him like a magnet. In the summer he revelled in long swims far out into the Atlantic Ocean and he won a medal at a contest for diving. He did some effective rescue work, both in aid of the regular life savers, and alone, for he was a swift and powerful swimmer and was possessed of unusual endurance. He also liked to swim inconceivable distances under water.

During this time he received an injury that necessitated a not very serious operation. We took him to the hospital. It was terrible to see him still under the ether, like one dead, as they brought him from the operating room on a stretcher. But the nurses found him intensely interesting with his quaint speeches and big words, of which he was perfectly unconscious, for they were in no wise an affectation.

In spite of the fact that Wallace had always known books on intimate terms, the day came when he began to read surreptitiously, and of course that meant books which he knew we would not approve. His aunt Maude ran upon one of these, "Dick Dead-eye" I

believe. Instead of forbidding him to read it we insisted on reading it aloud. Knowing his love of logic and consequent vulnerability, we subjected the book to every critical analysis and that more than powerful weapon, delicate ridicule. He grew very much ashamed that it had interested him at all, and he begged us not to continue reading it, which of course we were secretly only too happy to do. That was the only time I ever knew him to be interested in cheap and trashy literature, up to the time I last saw him in April, for he had accumulated a splendid library.

Wallace was fond of dogs and birds. He had a pair of beautiful Llewellyn setters, of which he was very fond. One of these that he called Jack, would sit beside him in the car and lean against his shoulder and look up into his face with the silliest most sentimental expression; and thus he would ride for miles. He was just too ludicrous for words and afforded much amusement to passers-by.

When Christmas came again, his present to his mother and father was a poem each, bound in brown suede leather, appropriately ornamented by himself.

He did far more worthy literary work at the age of fifteen, but unfortunately those were destroyed by fire.

He was just twelve years old when he wrote these, and I hope they will prove interesting to his admirers. Here they are, dedications and all:—

To
MY MOTHER
With all the love of her son,
WALLACE REID
Christmas 1904.
Dedicated to
My Mother.
W. WALLACE REID.

"She who has stood by her two erring boys with the patience of Job and the forgiveness of the Saviour."

## MOTHER LOVE.

"As I sit by the rain-lashed window
Looking out on the dreary day,
Thy vision comes before me,
And drives the rain away,
To leave but the glorious sunshine
Of a love so pure and good,
I deserve not, tho' it is mine
The love of motherhood."

"That love so great and glorious,
That the waters as they swirled—
Sang, "The hand that rocks the cradle,
Is the hand that rules the world."
The poets sing of heroes
And martyrs great and good,
But none so pure as thou dear,
With thy love of motherhood."

"And when thou diest, thou wilt leave
Below thee, here on earth,
Two rusty links of a broken chain,
That wither at thy birth.
Then thou wilt wait to greet us,
As we travel the darksome wood
Waiting the while to meet us
With thy love of motherhood."

To
MY FATHER
With all the love of his son,
WALLACE REID
Christmas 1904.

*"An Apostrophe to my Father. All love to you."*

Dedicated to
MY FATHER.
W. WALLACE REID.

"He who deserves great admiration for a wonderful change."

## A SIMILE.

" 'Tis dull and gloomy—
The pall of the mountain mist
Hangs low upon the land.
No sound except the curdling shriek
Of a fast receding train,
The dismal clang of bells—

Indeed the world is dull and bare
And the trees with naked branches in the mist,
Can send a shudder to your very soul."

"But lo! the sun bursts forth
Driving the mists
Like a flock of frightened sheep
That have been ravaged by the killer.

Away! to seek a refuge
In the mist-clad mountain-top
And see the trees, that 'fore
Had seemed so bare and naked,
Now unfold the gorgeous colorings of the Autumn leaves,
Which had been hidden in the
All enshrouding mists—
The whole earth takes on
A cheerful aspect—then—

"So like thy life, oh father, just
The mist of misery and unrest, and then
The glorious sunshine of the re-enlightened soul."

"So be it always—to which,
Amen."

Wallace wrote the two following poems at sixteen years of age, at college:—

## RETROSPECTION.

"Thy vision pure and restful
In a dreamy golden haze,
Brings back fond remembrances
Of joyous sweetheart days."
"When we wandered in the meadow
And by the babbling brook,
When first our love flower blossomed
And your hand in mine I took."

"When on languorous summer evenings,
'Neath the sighing wind-kist trees
Every worldly care and sorrow,
Would your gentle words appease."

"But those blissful days are over,
Like a transient flitting dream
Now no more than happy memories
They, through recollection, gleam."

"For the quick and eager passion
Of ardent, glowing youth
Is replaced by something calmer
Sweet devotion, sweeter truth."

"Now on peaceful summer evenings,
When the silver lady moon
Casts her scintillating pathway
O'er the sparkling lagoon,"

"While we sit in quiet survey
Of the mem'ry-laden past,
Thinking of our former crosses
And the peace that came at last,"
"There is something links us closer
With its blessed golden strands,
Welded for all time together,
By the touch of baby hands."

## SECLUSION'S DREAM.

"Around these dank and lichen covered walls,
The wind is wailing out its mournful strain
As if in pain
And ever and anon through sounding halls
Reëchoes from without the wierd refrain."
"Around this solemn ruin thunder rolls,
Rattling the shattered window on its sill
Then all is still;
My fancy pictures the departed souls
That once these mighty halls did fill."
"And once again I see midst myriad lights,
The stately measures of the minuet—
My eyes are wet,
For when my lonely soul reviews these sights,
My long forgotten grief assails me yet."
"The memories of days when I was young
And life and love lay forward, unalloyed
And I enjoyed
The tales of 'venture that the minstrels sung
Awhile the feasters with Madeira toyed."

"And I would sit and dream of future days
When with my fair-haired sweetheart by my side
Across the tide
Singing with mad abandon ancient lays
I'd skim, and safe to harbour glide."

"But ere my golden dreams fruition bore
Or I in turn could bear my love away
One awful day
Came unexpected call from Lethe's shore
And my Adored, hard fate, could but obey."

"Since then I've been a recluse, living here
Amidst the phantoms of my only love
Nor will I move
Till comes the Lethean summons to my ear
That I may join my heart's desire above."

## CHAPTER V.

### MOSTLY JUST BOY.

This was the age for the reading of James Fennimore Cooper's works—"Pathfinder," "Deer Slayer" and the like. The forest crowned hills and small glens with their rivulets, were a boyish inspiration,—especially the fact that scenes of the above author's book, "Water Witch," were laid in the immediate neighborhood, where even then the gate posts with an enormous iron latch, and the remnants of the old chimney of the inn, made famous by the book, called "Rust-in-Lust," were still standing. The pirate's stairway is still there. It is crude, is of stone but intact. It leads to the spring at which old Hendrick Hudson filled his fresh water casks before proceeding to discover the majestic Hudson River. What rich food for active young imaginations! He found a congenial boy about his own age and one became "Kit" and the other "Snake," and they could not possibly communicate with each other except in "code."

They built a hut in some "secret" place, where they could have a fire and read Cooper to their hearts' content and hear the wolves howl outside and the war-whoops of the savage Indians, as they fell upon some pioneer white man's log cabin, flourishing firebrands and scalping knives!

Wallace would go to bed in regulation fashion, have his bath, say his prayers and be tucked in. He would

lie there wide awake, tense, silent and listening. After an interminable lapse of time, the piano would cease, laughter would die away and darkness and silence envelope the house. A low whistle (code, of course) would reach his listening ears. He would silently, swiftly slip into his clothes and with the utmost caution raise the screen, (yes, there were screens in this "path-finder's" abode) and slip cautiously down a sloping roof just outside his room window, and he was gone to follow that low, clear, *mysterious* whistle! He could just as easily have gone down the stairs and out the front door in perfect safety, for carefree households slumber soundly; but no, that would *never* do for a "path-finder" and slayer of wild Indians!

One night, when his father and mother were not there to see that all was well, in the small hours one of his aunts heard a dull foot-fall! She awakened her sister, enjoining silence. They listened in fear and trembling. The dull steady foot-falls continued. They concluded it was on the front porch and that it could not be a burglar, for he would be inside the house by that time. They plucked up courage and noiselessly, cautiously, made their way together down the stair-way in the darkness. They stole to the window and peered out. Self appointed, to guard the slumbering inmates of the home, in the absence of his parents, those bulwarks of safety to childish minds, there was Wallace patrolling solemnly back and forth —back and forth—on the front porch, with an old gun in the crotch of his shoulder, and his legs bound with strips of cloth, in lieu of leggings, in true military style.

We never were just clear as to which was "Kit" and which was "Snake," but it was Wallace, whichever brave pioneer he might have been.

One day I heard of his growing intimacy with a very non-descript lad, and of whom it was rumored that he was pilfering from the till of his father's fish market. I told Wallace of my objections to him, as a fitting companion for my son. Of course it was hopeless for him to try to make me comprehend a "pioneer's" view-point on human valuations, so he simply did not try. But like a loyal friend, that it was his inborn nature to be, he stoutly defended him; so stoutly, that I finally said,—"Wallace, I do not wish to be unfair to your friend, and if I have been wrong, I shall give your friend the benefit of my error, so please ask him to join us at luncheon Saturday."

He was several years older than Wallace and lived some distance down the coast. He came, and of course he felt quite as much out of his element as one of his father's fish hawled up out of its native ocean. He evidently had never heard of a napkin, for when the maid finally opened it and handed it to him, he looked at it so puzzled, then laid it upon the table and never touched it again. The rest, I leave to the reader's imagination.

Suffice it to say, Wallace's enthusiasm for his new found friend began to wane and soon died away. He concluded that while he might be an interesting pioneer, yet there were others equally interesting; and as "stealing" was an ugly word, and in pioneer times,

capital punishment was inflicted upon horse thieves, he forth-with, (figuratively speaking), hung the offender to a tree—and forgot him. Besides, Wallace could not quite forget that he was linked fast to the twentieth century for a large portion of his time and he was ever alive to the eternal fitness of things.

In the course of his peregrinations he had met a little girl, possibly ten years or so of age, whose shy glances and golden curls had won his admiration. He had a small allowance of spending money paid him every Saturday morning. This money he religiously reserved for "treats" of ice cream and soda water every week-end for this little blue-eyed girl. Nor could all the blandishments of all the other youthful beauties of this period tempt him to one dish of ice cream disloyal to his one charmer. It was pleasing to note this budding trait of constancy.

One night Wallace, who had now concluded that it was not altogether "manly" to have his mother hear his prayers, called to me that he wished that I would hear them! I gladly came. He climbed into bed rather deliberately instead of jumping in like a young tornado as usual. I leaned over and kissed him and his arms clung to my neck. Finally, he asked me rather shame-facedly, to sit by him and hold his hand until he went to sleep. I sat down, and would have been dull if I had not known there was something weighing heavily upon his mind. An inspiration came to me.

The day had come to him that I believe comes to all red-blooded young American boys, "Kit" and "Snake" had planned to "run away;" and my parti-

cular branch of this youthful partnership was not finding it so pleasant when the time came, as he had so thrillingly anticipated. I said, "Now dear, if you and Johnnie want to run away, it is not necessary for you to go secretly. I will give you the railroad fare up to the city and enough money to give you a bed and food for two days. But after that you must look to your earnings, as you are now such big men. But for a little boy like you not to appreciate your home and family, horses and dogs any better than I see you do, then I shall immediately get another boy to take your place and he shall have your room and place at the table and there will be no further room for you; so you must not come back again. I will kiss you good-bye and you can write to me when you and Johnnie have conquered the world. I will pack your things and Hughie can drive you to the station. (kiss) Good-night dear." (start to go.)

The dear boy held tight to my hand and would not let me go, to my secret delight. "Mamma darling, I didn't want to go anyway—and please don't get another boy in my place. It was for Johnnie, because they don't treat him right at home and he was so unhappy, and I was only going for his sake."

He hugged me close and kissed me fervently and was so happy to be "back home again." That is how Wallace "ran away" only once and how my "prodigal" was welcomed "back home again."

That was the sort of domestic diplomacy employed toward Wallace when he was just a boy, in the sheltered harbor of home!

# CHAPTER VI.

## MILITARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DAYS.

We concluded that Wallace should be sent to Military School, because his great height was inclining him to stoop to be nearer the height of the boys of his age. The Freehold Military School (New Jersey) was selected.

Then busy days followed, getting his equipment together, marking things and going to the tailor to be fitted with military uniform and the like. Among other things required was a marked napkin ring. A sterling silver one was bought and his father had an inspiration to have it marked "On Guard." But Wallace regarded it as a "hoodoo," for that was one form of punishment used at the school. He held that napkin ring was a constant reminder to his instructors, who were as constantly putting him "On Guard."

One day, a number of these budding military officers had a lively skirmish (quite consistent, you see) and Wallace with his giant strength, was proving a formidable adversary, when some hot headed youth of Latin blood, stabbed him deep in the leg, and he was laid up in the school's hospital ward for repairs. But he would not hear to my being notified; and I never knew until he came home on his vacation, when he showed me the scar.

He suffered from home sickness a great deal, so his aunt Maude (my sister) and myself made frequent trips to Freehold on visiting days.

These youthful soldiers were given three minutes in which to dress. Wallace and his room-mate would prepare their trousers, lay them on top of the bed so that they could pull their legs out from under the covers and thrust them into their trousers as they lay upon their beds. They figured this out to a "nicety" and practiced it until their skill and speed were breath-taking!

They were assembled for inspection and in military style, they must present their hands, palms down, for inspection of their finger nails. These young rogues would clean all but their thumb nails, which they concealed in their palms, and they were perfectly delighted with the tremendous saving of energy they had thus achieved.

However, his percentages were low—appallingly low—but his bills were equally high. We learned that the "Major," then quite young himself, had a car. And in those days cars were far from reliable mechanically, or as to tires; and in our first experience, Wallace had learned to drive and had been quick to grasp the mechanical mysteries; also the herculean task of "changing tires." He was very convenient when the car called for cranking, as self-starters were entirely unknown. So when youth met youth and there was a car, the call of the great out-of-doors was, not unnaturally, resistless. So they enjoyed the Major's car and the percentages suffered.

No wonder Wallace had learned something about a car! The first one, for which we were persuaded to part with perfectly good money, for the questionable joy of owning, was known as the "Long Distance." At that time automobiles were more or less of curiosities and were surely less than reliable modes of travel. None could have been worse than ours, for in the one month we owned it, the bill for repairs was four hundred dollars.

One day out of this entire month of ownership, Wallace was permitted to take the car alone. He drove the very "long distance" of three miles from home and back as far as the draw-bridge at Highlands, which has a considerable super-structure of iron work. Just as Wallace started onto the draw-bridge, there was a loud "bang" and the sound of falling pieces of iron and steel. Before the "bang" was half finished, Wallace had scaled the iron super-structure like a flying squirrel. The pieces were picked up and the wreck was towed on to the boat for New York, thence to the junk yard.

One hot, hot day of that eventful month, we had reached Sea Bright, had drawn up to the curb and had done our marketing. When we came back to the car, the rest of us climbed in and sat there in the blazing sun, for it had no "top." Wallace cranked and cranked. The perspiration streamed down his face. A well dressed pale young Italian, with a dainty black moustache, stood in the shade smiling and watching Wallace's fruitless efforts in the glaring sun. The heat, the exertion and the utter lack of response

from the car, and the cool and smiling young Italian in the shade, began to irritate him. Wallace continued to "crank" and to perspire and his eyes now blazed. The cool young Italian finally said very pleasantly, "grinda-da-organ, maka-no-music." Wallace started for him. I had seen the inevitable and jumped out. I succeeded in restraining Wallace. It was all so sudden that the young Italian never knew how much danger he was in, for he continued to smile encouragingly.

However, these experiences did not discourage us for we immediately bought a new one, our first Cadillac, which was quite well behaved and capable.

Wallace's aunt Maude and myself went to the closing exercises, where his only medal was for elocution and he was born with eloquence at his tongue's tip. This was a legitimate inheritance, not only from his parents, but from his grandfather, Col. "Harry" who was a fine orator.

Wallace was more than delighted to be back home.

We had bought a larger home directly across the road from the first one. The old one we leased during the summer months—one summer to Gustave Frohman and family. With them resided the father of the well known dramatic stars, Olive Windham and Janet Beecher. For two years it was leased by Perriton Maxwell, then Managing Editor of Cosmopolitan Magazine, who also made "Glory View" the birthplace of "The American Magazine." The larger one we now kept open most of the year. This we called "River Rest," for it was directly on and eighty feet

Wallace at his Boyhood Home on the Shrewsbury River.

above the Shrewsbury River, and it was here that Wallace spent the greater part of his boyhood days.

We now kept two cars, one of which was for my personal use. This one Wallace liked. He would invite some boy friend and they would drive to some popular shore restaurant where there was music, and the two could feel quite grown up and almost blasé. Engagements with one of these young lads seemed to be growing in frequency, and as I had heard that he was rather fond of cocktails, this growing intimacy worried me.

They went one Saturday night, which was the fashionable night of the week at this particular restaurant. It was usually crowded with the most fashionable people of Monmouth County, for they had excellent music and were noted for their seafood and terrapin. Wallace's friend was very tall and gaunt. The two donned their dress suits and sallied forth. They were feeling especially important. They dined and smoked and lingered an hour or more and tried to look old in the ways of the world. His friend magnanimously volunteered to tip the waiter. Wallace paid the check. His friend, tipping his chair back, and thus stretching his full gaunt length into an inclined plane—as the expectant waiter had finally started to depart—he raised his hand pompously, motioning the man back again; and the poor fellow had no choice but to refuse the tip or turn up his palm to receive it. Being provident, he turned up his palm. Thereupon Wallace's companion, with much importance,

gravely dropped fifteen pennies into the astonished and disappointed waiter's hand.

Wallace assured me, in telling it, that he knew that every eye in the dining room was upon them and that they were smiling amusedly at two big children who thought they had grown up! As Wallace did not enjoy the prospect of similar embarassment, this intimacy naturally sickened and died.

When vacation was over, we sent him to a preparatory college for Princeton, which was also co-educational. While he still suffered more or less from his old malady of homesickness, he plunged with much enthusiasm into football, basketball and the like; and because he could not brook "mere girls" getting better percentages than himself, his percentages in his studies soared as high, as they had fallen low in the Military School.

Wallace remained in this college four years. He managed one of the football teams and became editor of the college paper. In the interim, he would occasionally run down to Allentown, Pennsylvania, and attend medical lectures, thinking of becoming a physician and surgeon, which was natural, as there were many of that profession both on his father's side and on my father's side of the house. However, I was having Wallace prepared for a classical course at Princeton, fitting him for a career of letters, for which he had given such early and brilliant promise.

Among the many young ladies attending this institution, there was one, pretty as a picture, with dimpling cheeks, a rose-leaf complexion, laughing

blue eyes, dainty as a fairy, brilliantly intelligent and intellectual and with perfect poise. In speaking of her to me, he said, "She is the only girl whom I sought to kiss who refused me that honor." She was his first fine, real love and she remained enshrined in his heart until he had offered her his heart and his name, and she had declined.

Wallace arranged for me to meet her and her mother at the old Knickerbocker Hotel, and I found her altogether winsome, cultured and charming.

Wallace lost much of his respect for the man at the head of this institution who, though very erudite, was not a man of much culture. The forfeiting of the boy's respect was for an unusual reason. He chanced to see this same professor treating his timid and shrinking little wife rather as a menial than an equal. He felt pity for the plain little woman and contempt for the spirit of over-weaning egotism in the man.

Now, was not that the material out of which real heroes are made?

# CHAPTER VII.

## COMMENCEMENT DAYS IN LIFE'S SCHOOL.

During vacation a "try-out" production of a play designed as a starring vehicle for Robert Edeson, "Unto the Fourth Generation," was made, in which Wallace played a college boy. Mr. Henry B. Harris (who went down on the Titanic) and his wife came from New York especially to see it. They were at once greatly enamoured of Wallace and sought to sign a contract for him to go under Mr. Harris' management in the spoken drama.

Miss Caryl Frohman, who also was quick to see the dramatic possibilities in this over-grown young college lad, sought to interest him in a contract with her brother, Daniel Frohman. But my intentions were that he should enter Princeton in the fall.

His father knew "Buffalo Bill" Cody quite well and conceived the brilliant idea of sending him out to Cody, Wyoming, for a little Wild West experience. He was not gone many weeks before his father grew homesick for the boy and had another bright inspiration and telegraphed him to come home at once that his mother was at the point of death. The poor boy, nearly distraught, started at once on the long journey back. His father had neglected to tell me of his sensational telegram, and when at last he reached his journey's end,

he rushed wildly to the house nearly frantic with anxiety, only to find us gone out in the car. But his father had accomplished his desire and was perfectly satisfied that the end had justified the means.

When a young birdling once falls from its nest, he may be replaced a dozen times, but he will at once proceed to fall out again. So it was with Wallace. He had had the taste of freedom, given by self-earned money, and Princeton had lost all charms for him; and try as I would to re-inspire him, it was unavailing, so that hope and ambition of his mother's alas! must needs go unfulfilled.

Mr. Perriton Maxwell placed him with Motor Magazine and Motor Boating. From there he went to the Newark Star, where he conducted a column headed "As Told in Essex." He liked the reportorial work for its color and variety and the element of chance there was in it.

The remuneration was small, however. He wished to bring a present to me. Some little milliner, where he boarded, suggested a hat and that she would make it. When he came home that week-end I saw him coming down the drive-way carrying a young pasteboard *trunk*. It contained the hat, a black velvet monstrosity of the "peach-basket" variety. Poor lad—his small earnings—how sorry for him I felt—he seemed such a trusting child to be out in the world alone—but the brave spirit of the boy to sacrifice something he might wish himself that his mother should be remembered—over this loving act I could rejoice genuinely and with much enthusiasm—but oh! that

hat! It was more of a black velvet tent, but I was heroic enough to wear it for his sake when he was home; and oh how glad I was when he himself concluded that somehow it did not just exactly fit my peculiar "style."

Sometime later his father wrote a dramatic playlet of Western life called "The Girl and the Ranger." He was suddenly disappointed by the man engaged to play the young husband, the time being very short before the opening date to secure a new man and rehearse him into the part, his father suggested Wallace, which I very bitterly opposed. He then promised to get an actor, if I would consent to Wallace getting "up" in the part for safety's sake—as understudy. I finally, very foolishly, consented. Wallace learned the part and went on the road with his father in this one-act play.

But that was short-lived.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## LITTLE ADVENTURES OUT OF HOME HARBOR.

The tour of "The Girl and the Ranger" was one of short duration. They landed in Chicago, where Wallace had his first taste of the "movies."

I was severely wounded in an automobile accident shortly after this and they returned to the East.

Soon afterward his father wrote the play "The Confession," which had its original production in Baltimore with the written approval of the late Cardinal Gibbons. The management of this play requested me to call upon Bishop McFaul of Trenton, New Jersey, prior to its appearance in that city; after which they sent me to Providence, Rhode Island, where I had the honor of being the first woman ever permitted to address the Catholic Club there, upon a night other than "Ladies' Night."

Such well known artists as Theodore Roberts and Orrin Johnson were in the cast. The play was then brought to New York City, where I was asked to lend my services in polishing it up for New York production. It opened at the Bijou Theatre to a crowded house, among whom were many distinguished New Yorkers and a number of personages of title.

We attended the opening performance, including Wallace of course. This brought the boy into contact with many society people and other persons prominent in New York and elsewhere. Among them was a brilliant and talented beauty of the Spanish type, but a highly cultured young American girl nevertheless—however, she was not a New Yorker. Wallace fell madly in love with her. She was beautiful of character and disposition, as well as young and marvellously beautiful to look upon, highly talented musically, cultured and altogether fascinating. Music, particularly the classics, was always a powerful magnet to Wallace in anyone, in those days. Then added to these, soft and shining brown eyes, warm coloring, grace of carriage and a thousand and one other charms—could one wonder? Seen together in New York's great hotels, in theatre parties, any where they went, there was not a couple in our great city who could compare with them. They seemed so eminently suited to each other.

Wallace enjoyed a wonderful winter in New York but he did not forget his mother and his home overlooking river and sea. But my boy was growing fast into manhood and venturing farther and for longer periods from the harbor of home.

The beautiful princess went abroad to other triumphs, but never was she spoiled by the tremendous admiration she received. She was also "rich" in this world's goods, so that she could and did dress like the princess she was.

Wallace went to the Vitagraph Company, where he gained his first real training for his triumphs, as the artist he afterwards became, in the silent drama. It was some time later, just when I cannot say, Wallace became engaged to the fairy princess. Who was she? Now, that would be telling—don't you think?

# CHAPTER IX.

## IN LIFE'S OPEN SEA.

Wallace remained for a time with the Vitagraph. The Reliance then sought him and offered him greater remuneration which, naturally, he accepted.

One day his father sent Wallace to the Universal to close a contract with them for the picturization of one of his dramas. This company recognized Wallace's picture possibilities and made him an offer, which he accepted.

It was summer time. My telephone rang. It was Wallace. "Mother dear, please come up town and meet me at the Knickerbocker Hotel for luncheon. I will not have the time nor opportunity to come down home, and I cannot go, 'sweetheart mother,' without seeing you before I do."

"GO! Go where, dear?" That *"go"* was a chilling word to me.

"The company very suddenly concluded to send me out to the coast, to their studio there."

The sun ceased to shine and an icy hand seemed to be freezing—crushing my heart.

"Did you hear, mother dearest?"

"Yes, my dear boy, and I will take the first Sandy Hook boat going up and wait for you at the hotel. Now don't forget," I said cheerily. Words may speak the

actual truth, as those words did, but oh, the falsehood in my voice! But I could not think of sending my boy, my only child, now all eagerness and bouyant enthusiasm, on that long journey so far away from home, except with pleasant and cheerful memories of his mother and home.

Some young lad who was being sent out there at the same time came with him. They were so full of hope and anticipation and happy confidence! We laughed and chatted gayly over our luncheon. I listened to their plans and what were then wonderful air-castles, and enthused with them. Who so heartless as to dampen their youthful ardor? Not a mother, surely. My heart was leaden but my lips smiled and they were radiantly happy, and Wallace never knew the knife in my heart, which that parting was to me. He never did know, for youth is care-free and thoughtless.

He never did know, even the last time I saw him; unless he is standing beside me now, with his hand upon my shoulder, following these lines as I pen them.

"Darling little mother—sweetheart mother mine!" I can almost hear him say—like he used to, when he would pick me up and raise me to the ceiling at home, revelling in that giant strength of his. This, I feel he has taken with him in the strength of character he showed in his last, greatest of all possible sacrifices, to hold fast to his own self command.

I am whispering to him in my heart, believing—clinging desparately in my believing—that he is with me now. "Oh, my darling—oh, my own—*mine,* once

more after so many years, do not leave me alone, suffering, sorrowing for you—for today I am no longer strong like in that day of parting so long ago. No, I am weak and clinging selfishly to you—holding you fast, for you, and you alone, can comfort me."

Balm of healing seems poured over my hurt heart, so I am surely not believing in vain that he is with me; nearer than in the long years while he was three thousand terrible miles away, sailing farther and farther away through sunshine and through gales.

Yes, he must be near me, otherwise "FOREVER" would be a long time—too long to endure.

Wallace with his Dog "Spike" and his Gun.

## CHAPTER X.

### HIS EARLY SAILING INTO THE STRANGE PORT OF MATRIMONY.

Wallace wrote to me of his work and of his interests. He liked the West. Sometimes he was homesick, as was his wont at both the Military School and at College. I saw his interest in his Eastern home gradually wane, which caused the miles between us to grow and grow. He was still in his "teens" when he sailed so far away, so brave and so gay.

He was not there so many months when, one day in August, I received a letter announcing to me that he was to be married at Christmas. He wrote me that she was the "only girl in the world"—strange statement from an old man of nineteen—and that old fellow had determined to embark on the hidden sea of marriage with said "only girl." I took the liberty of advising them not to be in too much haste, and thereby grossly offended both these mettlesome young things.

I suggested that a little less speed would only be just and wise for the old gentleman of nineteen and the "only girl in the world." I thereby had committed an unforgivable crime. Such temerity on my part! Was it to be believed possible? I do not know yet whether I ever was quite forgiven for the awful offense. How could a mere mother—inexperienced

persons, these mothers—especially one, dreaming alone to the music of the whispering or thundering old Atlantic, with nothing but the scent of the sea in her nostrils, and only the light of the moon and the stars by which to read her thought-books. How could she understand the perfectly simple booking of passage on this much-travelled sea? Wise inexperience—and stupid mothers.

They at once took my advice and postponed their marriage from Christmas to the October thirteenth *pre*ceding—and in the year of our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Thirteen. Am I forgiven? I wonder. I will be, however, when their *own* contemplates embarkation on this same strange sea some years hence. Yes, I will be forgiven then and understood quite some better.

But then, Life is just the same, the wide world over. So I smiled at their offended dignity. Yes, some years hence, they will see.

The next I knew, the old gentleman of nineteen and the "only girl in the world" had "set sail." They were now Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Reid. They worked together and played together and they very kindly permitted the "other mother" to do everything in the world she wanted to do for them, which was a very great deal.

Then after five years of this marriage voyage, a very wonderful day came for them both. Billy arrived and claimed them for his parents. Wallace adored children and his happy pride can be better imagined than described. Of course Dorothy was very proud

and very happy too, for was she not Billy's mother? So Billy was hailed with delight.

When Billy was six months old, business brought Wallace East. So he announced to me that he was bringing the "only girl in the world" and Billy,—bringing them HOME, to meet Wallace's mother and his "sweetheart Mary Virginia" aged eighty, his two small aunts, Uncle Fred and Grand-dad, "Col. Harry." Coming Home!!!!

I had not seen my over-sized "baby" for about *six years*. Coming Home! They would be East several months and could spend four or five weeks with me—Joyous News! I was to meet my new daughter and their baby. Best of all, they would be there in time for Christmas. I had a genuine Old-Dominion "Mammy"—"Mammy Lou" and in good "old Virginia" style—*she could cook!* Such preparations! A warm room was cleared out and transformed into a nursery. Many, many labors of love,—joyous labors, and a family re-union! Billy's first Christmas tree was to be the centre decoration for this old-fashioned Christmas dinner of everything that belonged to such a dinner.

The day before Christmas eve, they arrived in the afternoon, at Red Bank, New Jersey, where I met them with my car. He, so tall and broad shouldered and dignified with his new honor of fatherhood. She, so petite and with the whiteness that goes with—shall I say it?—red hair and the importance and dignity that belonged with being mother of Billy. There were of

course, no other babies in the world,—at least none worth mentioning!

My "family" all arrived and gave cordial welcome to my new daughter. She was far from her own mother and we were all strangers to her, except Wallace, Billy and his nurse. We bade them all three welcome, with our hearts full of love for them, no small portion of which belonged to King Billy,—all that any one could possibly wish for in a baby, was King Billy.

Christmas dinner, with everything that could be thought of to make it an old-fashioned, old Virginia plantation Christmas dinner. All the day before and, of course, all day Christmas Day, until the raisins, nuts and candy had been reached, I was the busiest mother hostess in Monmouth County, so I had no opportunity to visit with them, much less "hold" Billy. Night came and my mother and family departed and Billy was tucked away by his nurse, fast asleep for the night. We had just a small "supper" for the few of us left. Old Mammy Lou had worked very hard, but she wanted to speak to me, so I went to hear what it was.

"Miss Butha, please don't feel bad, but I wants to tell you. Mistah Wallace and Mrs. Reid is done gwine to town tomorrow mawnin'. "

"Why Mammy Lou," I said in astonishment, "you are surely mistaken. They are to be with us several weeks, for that is what Mr. Wallace himself told me."

"No, Miss Butha, I done heard Mrs. Reid ask Mr. Wallace to take her to de city tomorrow, case it's so long since she been to New York, and jes kain't wait

to git dar, case she near 'bout crazy to see a good New York show."

"Mistah Wallace say, 'I got no business 'gagement yit awhile.' "

" 'Please,' an' she put huh arms around his neck. Den Mistah Wallace he say, 'all right, dear.' "

"Now please, Miss Butha, don't you be too hurt so's Mistah Wallace kin see."

"Thank you, Mammy Lou, you're just the best Mammy Lou that ever was."

The next morning on the eleven o'clock train, into the city they went, just as Mammy Lou had said. They never knew but that I thought the "business engagement" was of the utmost importance.

How could I be expected to know—living alone, to the music of the whispering or thundering old Atlantic, with nothing but the scent of the sea in my nostrils, and only the light of the stars and the moon by which to read my book of thoughts?

Oh, well, the call to youth of the bright city lights, its gay music and dancing, the theatres—the crowds—how could I blame them? It was all so entirely human.

That night the voice of the old ocean was kind to me and the stars smiled in through my window. Nearly twenty centuries ago a bright star in the East, shown down upon Bethlehem and a little Child.

God was very good to the world, and yesterday was that Child's birthday, which we had celebrated. I was just one of the millions of grains of human sand. Yes, God was good, and Peace spread her mantle over me, and I sank into slumber—happy.

# CHAPTER XI.

## FAIR WEATHER IN PROSPERITY'S SEA.

His wife, baby and nurse went home first and Wallace followed as soon as the work which brought him, was finished.

They had purchased a typical California bungalow in Morgan Place, Hollywood, where Billy enjoyed his third Christmas with tree and plenty of toys. Wallace sent me a photo, showing the tree, and himself sitting upon a toy auto big enough and strong enough to hold his weight, with a windshield and all. There is another with rubber tires, starting crank, bell and all, with Billy at the wheel, and his mother leaning over him. Wallace is watching Billy and smiling, as are Billy and his mother, but they are looking ahead. There is a rocking rabbit and a toy desk, as big as the child—a picture of Christmas joy.

Wallace had accepted an offer from the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. The "fan" mail, (letters from the admirers of the man and his work, letters from all over the world) had grown to such proportions that he had won stardom through his work and personality, and the firm gave it recognition.

His salary increased, as did his popularity; and they planned and built the house on DeLongpre Avenue, a long commodious structure, suggesting the

Moorish as well as the Spanish Mission. They moved from the Morgan Place house, which they sold. In the new home the rooms were large and airy, the French windows opening directly upon the terraces. While the lot is but an acre in size, yet it is bounded on three sides by avenues, one of which is Sunset Boulevard, which leads out to the sea beaches, Santa Monica and the like.

Wallace was fairly launched on the high sea of popularity and monetary success; still he remained the happy, care-free boy, thoroughly democratic and altogether a man's man, and yet a trusting, confiding boy, to whom intrigue was a sealed book, which he did not understand. Indeed, he but vaguely knew there was such a book, much less to know ought of its contents. His mind was as open as the sunlight and as care-free as the birds.

He was the soul of hospitality and his friends were legion. He had a wonderful library of fine editions of the best authors and some rare old volumes.

He had an arsenal of fine guns and pistols for all sorts of uses—for big game and little, for he was fond of hunting; and the open spaces and the solitudes of the mountains. He also tried his hand at archery and Billy had his bow as well as the grown-ups.

He had a wonderful den with an upright piano, a desk with drop-head and typewriter. There was a Victrola run electrically, which he would start, whether he was reading, writing or they were playing pool, for he had a table and plenty of cues. There was a large

boulder fire-place in this room, where a big wood fire blazed in the winter, and he made his own "fairy fire" to produce the beautiful colors found in a fire built of seashore driftwood. This he made in his own laboratory, which was remarkably equipped; particularly for a private home, for he loved experimentation in his hours of leisure. He had a microscope—the best—and he loved microscopic study. He had about everything that heart could desire and he knew the use of each and everything, and used them as well.

There was an attachment to the concert grand piano in the main living room, which could be converted into a pipe organ, and he spent much time playing it. He had about every musical instrument and there was not one of them that he could not play. There were guitars, banjos, six saxaphones, snare and bass drums and several fine violins and a viola or so. He was an unusually fine violinist for an amateur; and as for Victrolas, in addition to the one in the den, which by the way, was the one room that particularly reflected the man himself, there was a Victrola, electrically driven (as, in fact, they all were) in the arm of the overstuffed davenport in the main living room. There was one in console shape in the dining room, one in their boudoir upstairs in the shape of a large table lamp, a portable one to be carried "on location," as they call it, when they are called to localities not convenient to their own homes. In addition to these, there was another of the lamp variety in his dressing room at the studio.

Wallace sometimes painted in oils and there were several very creditable studies he had made, which were framed and hanging upon the walls.

He had a comparatively small projecting machine and silver sheet, which he sometimes used to run moving pictures in his den. He was fond of magic and would go to all kinds of trouble to entertain his friends with these mysteries. It was a perfect delight to him to see that he had seriously engaged and puzzled his guests.

There is a large swimming pool at the back of the house, and Billy is his father's own child as to swimming, for he is a perfect little fish in the water, and fearless, like his father.

Later, Wallace set up a regulation moving picture projecting machine in the library, when his friends would assemble in the long living room. This gave the distance for excellent moving pictures. Daily, one of his chauffeurs would go to Los Angeles and secure an evening's program of the current pictures. There were also some funny ones for Billy, which were run first, so that his nurse could get him to bed at a proper hour for a young man of his years.

After the pictures, the grown-ups would go to the den, where they would play pool or Wallace would work some tricks in magic, or they would play the piano.

Wallace, however, showed but little or no interest in cards; for he seemed to prefer a book or his violin or pipe organ music.

There were anywhere from a dozen to twenty or thirty people who would run in of an evening; some of the men with their wives; now and then they would bring one of their children. Many of them would come singly or in couples and most of them were people well known to the patrons of the moving pictures. Some brought knitting and they all seemed to enjoy the pictures as well as the patrons, who knew nothing of their construction.

Wallace had cars, from the days of that awful Long Distance, to many of the finest American makes. He liked a fast car and to drive fast when it was permissable; and he had such a marvellous command of a car and accuracy of eye for space and speed and distance, that the most timid need not fear to ride at top speed, with him at the wheel.

Among the many who came often to Wallace's home, the general run of them had their own homes and families, were at least comfortably well to do, or quite prosperous, for there are many good business heads among them who have made good real estate and other wise investments, and have thriven in consequence.

One of the frequent callers, was a young woman well known to the movie fans, who had originally been educated for Grand Opera, but who had met the terrible calamity of losing her voice. However, this did not take from her her knowledge of good music; and when she, her husband and his mother would run in, she and Wallace would spend the greater part of the evening at the piano—

he with his violin. They would have a wonderful time and it would be more than enjoyable to those who sat around listening.

Many of these people are more than well bred and possessed of various accomplishments, that would cause them to grace most drawing rooms.

There are always those everywhere, who are on the road to the group of derelicts, who are failures or whose society is undesirable and whose association is unwholesome. But, as a rule, this class is in the minority in most walks of life and groups of people; but unfortunately, they manage to thrust themselves into the public eye. And again, unfortunately, there is a predilection among many of the public-at-large, who rather enjoy reading and talking of the derelictions of their less desirable brethren, than the achievements of those who have labored and improved the "ten talents" entrusted to them and thereby acquired a place just a little in advance of the public-at-large.

When civilization reaches the point where it can genuinely rejoice over the worthy worker whose ambition and energy have made him a pace maker for the rank and file in his specific calling—and not to derive a certain morbid pleasure from the unfortunately weak and erring, then the limelight will automatically turn its bright rays upon the constructionist and leave the destructionist in the darkness of no attention attracted to himself. The weakling is a destructionist, for he cannot destroy himself without hurting some one or more who do not merit the wounds.

The problem is too intricate for human limitations —so after all is said and done, these are God's problems.

If each individual does his "bit" like each separate drop of salt water that co-operates with his neighboring drop, then the ebb and flow of the tides of the sea will come and go on schedule and the large achievement be simple and easy, through proper co-operation.

If, with the faith of a little child, we do our duty, then the ebb and flow of the human tide will also work out on schedule.

# CHAPTER XII.

## SHOALS, JAGGED ROCKS AND DANGERS.

As Wallace's prosperity grew apace, greater and more frequent came the calls for "loans" and more numerous grew the applicants. There were many of the "movie" world, some genuine, some of the ambitionless variety who were always about to set the world on fire in a new picture and how "crazy" the producers had been to secure this particular person's services, but the name of picture and producer could not yet be divulged—a "secret"—which remained a "secret" for it existed only in the mind of the indigent one, and never materialized under any flesh and blood producing firm.

These chronic borrowers were by no means confined to the "movie" world—they came from all callings and with every possible form of excuse. Just to live in the same town with some one whose great uncle had perhaps sold a tie to Wallace's great uncle, when Wallace was a baby, was sufficient reason. As all successful people know, they are hounded by an army of barnacles, who will do nothing themselves—so they are always "broke."

This class, of course, did not usually comprise the frequent visitors at the house, for a borrower general-

ly wishes to be forgotten until he has thought out a new excuse, as his new necessities arise.

Hollywood is a Mecca for movie-struck people from all over the world. They have confidence in themselves and the courage to spend to the last penny of their savings, just to "land" in the movie capitol, where they expect the whole colony of producers to be lined up (like so many taxi drivers looking for a "fare") at the station, waiting for the train to come in and all too eager to compete for their services. These people are sincere, earnest and entirely deserving, but one of the problems for the public authorities there—so I have been told.

Many of those he aided were entirely worthy and the troubles but temporary. But Wallace's grandmother Reid's motto was, that it was better to help nine unworthy cases than miss the one worthy.

That Wallace should be charitable was natural, and that he should be hospitable was also natural. But he was too tender of the feelings he credited to some of these forward ones, judging their sensitiveness by his own. He likewise believed too readily—believed implicitly every word of their troubles as they related them. This grew to menacing proportions as time passed, and sapped from his salary large sums—appallingly large in the aggregate—which should have been used for investments, looking ahead to the day of retirement, as any provident business man should do.

Going into the fastnesses of the mountains and the waste places of the desert, on location, where people would fall ill or get a bone broken or otherwise injured,

miles and miles from access to any kind of a physician, and as no physician is carried out into these wildernesses with these little groups of workers, more than once Wallace came forward and patched up these injured ones, as well as himself, for here his attendance at medical lectures in his college days, often stood the people and himself in good stead.

As was told in a preceding chapter, Wallace liked to have about him, as his own, the things he used. That is how he acquired a physician's complete equipment of instruments, medicines, etc., in a doctor's regulation case, such as he usually carries when making his round of calls upon his patients. This Wallace carried with him always, for some years, when out on "location" just as he did his portable Victrola and his violin.

There is one who occasionally comes to his home—a man young, handsome, successful, popular upon the screen. He drives fast cars—fine ones. People trust their lives in his keeping. He has not betrayed that trust. To meet him, he arrests one's attention by a certain quiet, tinged with a note of the furtive. It impresses one as a distrustful characteristic—distrustful of strangers. I learn, to my surprise, that this poor fellow is in the toils. I do not know the marks and signs, if there are any, but there is a vague, elusive something about him. He is a gentleman, and one feels that he comes of gentle blood, in fact, above the average. It surely is not too late for him to "right about face," before the time comes when it will be too late—the death knell in those terrible words—TOO LATE!

Among those who grew into coming to Wallace quite regularly for aid of various kinds, was a man older than Wallace, the son of a famous star of the speaking stage—this father a scholar and a gentleman, a man standing high in the history of the spoken drama. Wallace held this artist and his contribution to dramatic art, in high esteem, and in recognition of that fact, he felt sympathy for the son and backed his sympathy with aid. Sometimes he used his influence that he should have work; but he grew worse and worse, and then, poor creature, realizing his condition and that it was too late for retreat, and he too weak to try, would threaten to commit suicide. He is in the clutches, helpless, bound about the by the silent, life-sapping tentacles—a tragic shadow of what he was—now merely existing but practically dead.

Oh! But his people — his father, who can still move about among his fellow-men, his head high, his name honored for a lifetime of artistic labor, written high upon the tablets of achievement—but over his head hangs the sword of Damocles, and in his bosom is a heart of lead—yet a little while he may smile and hold up his head, thanking God for each little second of reprieve, ere the sword shall cut the hair which holds it, and the heart of lead be broken. He listens in terror for the toll of the bell, when in one flash, like a stroke of lightning, the all-enveloping mantle of shame will fall over his fair name, and in one terrible moment obliterate the labor of the flower of his years —nay, of a lifetime.

Poor father, I never met you, but I have enjoyed the pleasure of your art, but for you my heart sorrows! Your son it was, who first cast the soil of slander upon the fair name of him whom I mourn—and which soil I seek to wash away with the baptism of tears—tears of blood wrung from the deepest depths of his mother's sorrowing heart and cover it with beautiful flowers of memory, gathered in the garden of a mother's love where grow blossoms of beauty that never fade or perish.

That was not your son, but the Demon who forged his tongue, and the poor boy could not prevent. May the merciful black-robed Angel claim him before the toll of that terrible death-bell for fair fame.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## A SHINING PINNACLE.

Wallace, my darling one and only child, was coming to New York to be here several months! When he started, he wired me and then again several times on his way here. What joy to know that he was to be here several months, and I could see him and he could come down to visit me in his boyhood home—and visit his two small aunts, Maude and Virginia, his Uncle Fred and, best of all, his dear old grandmother, "sweetheart Mary Virginia," he always called her.

When my boy loomed up in that Pennsylvania station, he was easy enough to see—the tallest, handsomest, most perfect specimen of manhood in the range of my vision. My! but was I not proud of him! My son!

God was very good to me to bless me with such a son! Rockefeller, Morgan, Wall Street, had no riches to compare with mine. He just swept me from my feet into his arms, as if I were a child of two or three, and kissed me. I would not exchange that kiss for a king's ransom.

But now—now—there will never be another greeting, another kiss from my son to his mother—in this world—my heart ceases to beat—as I confront that terrible word—NEVER!!

"Mother! Mother!" reprovingly sounds in the ear of my inner consciousness, "That is not like my brave little mother. Ring true to the blood of your fathers!"

Those words seem as clear and distinct to me as if my sister, sitting beside me, had looked up and spoken them. Oh, how good is our Heavenly Father, to send such rays of light into the empty blackness—so good!

A small furnished apartment had been taken for him near Fifth Avenue and within easy motoring distance of the studio at the eastern end of the Fifty-ninth Street bridge.

He arrived with his secretary, a quiet young man, who without apparent effort soon had Wallace established in the apartment just as though he had been living there for months. The largest trunk of all he brought, had been built especially for—what do you think? His violin and a number of other musical instruments which were his favorites. There were tricks in magic, books and I cannot tell you what else —thoroughly innocent pleasures for the amusement of this big over-grown boy.

Nothing could have been out of harmony more completely, with this many faceted artist, than as a business man burdened with financial cares. I never saw him give one moment to scanning the stock market and other business reports in the daily papers; but beauty in pictures, books, music or the changing landscapes of mountain, sea or desert, or of people; but people were only beautiful individually, not in masses like mountains and sparkling waves.

Wallace had the keenest sense of humor, and its genial rays kept the sun shining in his happy-go-lucky heart, whether the sun shone without or the rain fell and the day was bleak and drear.

His address was not to be known until the work on the picture was finished. However, the address was soon, like most other secrets—everyone's "secret."

The picture in which, I consider, he attained the highest point of artistry in his entire career, was "Peter Ibbetson." His impersonation of an ideal lover in the dream life of these ideal lovers, was full of poetry, romance, reverential love and unswerving faith and constancy, with sufficient warmth to make it vital, and yet not the slightest taint of the exotic to coarsen this perfect love poem into the all too fleshly, so much portrayed today. It glowed with the steady white purity and strength and calm of the sea's deepest depths, so unlike the bubble-like loves on the restless surface of today, which cannot survive under the slightest pressure, so they crush like an eggshell or burst like a bubble, when scarcely more than submerged beneath the waves of life's real sea.

Miss Elsie Ferguson's Duchess was played in perfect harmony and was entirely attuned—dainty, elusive, ideal, constant through life into death, the years so welding this perfect love into one, that with her death came his awakening and death, and the birth and blossoming of this enduring love, into Life Eternal.

This role was especially congenial to Wallace, for he was Romance incarnate, and he was an Idealist.

Wallace in Two Episodes of "Peter Ibbetson."

The perfect condition of the boy, physically in splendid health, mentally and artistically eminently alert, as the picture breathes from his first appearance, until his madness and death in the dank and musty old stone prison cell, is very apparent. The picture is as perfect as the man himself was perfect at the time of its taking.

While in New York, Wallace was approached by other producing firms, of high standing, with flattering offers—flattering beyond the dreams of avarice, and with unbelievably large tenders to the firm to which Wallace was under contract, to release him—but their existing contract called for two more years, and Wallace was such a profit-bearing asset, that no offers could tempt them. Could you blame either firm? He was well worth it. But did it "turn" Wallace's head? Not one whit—he went right along, happy-go-lucky, doing his work as if it were play.

Soon crowds upon crowds of people swarmed the apartment and the tiny grand piano, on which stood a picture of his wife and baby in a silver frame, rang under the touch of artists well known on Broadway, and Wallace played his violin and saxaphone and all was happiness. He was basking in the sunshine of a popularity such as falls to the lot of but few men in this world, no matter what his calling.

Wallace took it all as in the day's work or play, and personal vanity or egotism never seem to occur to him. People from all walks of life swarmed his apartment. Bright and clever people were as the elixir of life to him and he fairly glowed with the joy of just

living. He expanded in this genial atmosphere and with the change of air and surroundings, one could see him thrive and improve—if that were possible.

One day, he called his little son Billy on the long distance. It was Billy's birthday and he was having a children's party. When Wallace heard his dearly loved childish treble, "Hello, Daddy dear," big happy tears fell from Wallace's eyes, and he forthwith grew home-sick. "I'm having a party and lots of good things to eat—and I want to go back to the table."

"All right, dear. Do you love Daddy?"

"Yes, Daddy dear, good-bye," and he was gone.

How history repeats itself. I thought of the day when the two older children, Billy's parents, longed to get where the bright lights and wonderful restaurants were. In the course of time, Billy will be where his father was—where I had been. He will likewise be just a little disappointed that he does not "count," that he is not missed as much as he could wish—and so the wheel goes round and round.

But the picture was not finished, and when the receiver had been replaced, the laughter and music resumed and Wallace was happy once more, in New York, and Billy equally happy way out in California.

Among those who visited at this apartment was the handsome, well-groomed fellow, with a touch of a frightened, furtive look in his face which so puzzled me. This was my first meeting of the man, and not knowing such things could be, I was puzzled and did not understand. Poor, poor fellow, how I hope he will "wake up" at once; and how sorry I feel

for the mother of this handsome, well-groomed gentleman! Does she know? I wonder, and hope that she does not. If she is on the "Other Side," she is just waiting for the fine garment of his spirit, which she had given him, to fall away into decay, while she waits and waits to receive him. It is not that this dwelling place of flesh is only a narrow abode—a garment—for it is an instrument as well, a machine that must be kept in good order for its spiritual occupant to prosper and grow in beauty; for if it is clogged with the unwholesome, or with poison, the spirit within is in danger of getting caught and injured in the cogs. So it behooves us one and all, to set steadfast guards both night and day, over this very precious housing.

Wallace set a day soon after his arrival, to drive down and spend a day or so at home. Arrangements were made for the rest of the family to come. On the way down, all along the way, boys and girls recognized him, shouting after him, "Hello, Wally!" and he would wave jovially back to them. It was like a triumphal march of a king on the way to his coronation.

His car was followed by several others—reporters, photographers for the press. This took a great portion of time—theirs and ours; but we were all so glad of this visit, and his mother and his "sweetheart Mary Virginia" sat up with him until four o'clock in the morning, reminiscing. You can imagine the love of this girl, now eighty-two years young, to do such an unheard-of thing!

He came several times; once by the Sandy Hook boat and he was photographed and interviewed on the

way down. Such is the life of a man belonging to the public—the public which was his chum.

The day came when that same brave figure of my lad, went back into that station, whence he had come only yesterday, it seemed. He vanished into the Pullman—the train receded—growing smaller and smaller, disappearing into the earth—lost to view. His sojourn in New York, in spite of his work, had sent him away in the very "pink" of condition. I will never believe that Wallace ever left this city with a taint or tarnish of any kind upon him, nor in any way touched with anything abnormal, unless it be a super-abundance of health and joy.

It was not pleasant to see him go; but he was determined that the winter should see me in his home for those months, with the hope in his heart and on his lips, that it might become permanent—my residence out there. That was not an unpleasant prospect, with his very apparent pleasure and expressed hope to surround me with everything heart could desire. Only! —my own dear mother, now eighty-two, and the rest of my immediate family lived here in the East. But I was to go out to California for the winter, which I did.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## HOLLYWOOD.

After trying to shape my affairs, I suddenly dropped everything, packed my trunk, bade my family good-bye, with many misgivings as to the advisability of putting so many miles, for so long a time, between my mother and myself, at her advanced age.

I was to arrive in Los Angeles at two o'clock in the afternoon. We were winding in and out among the mountains and arid wastes of barren lands. We ran into a rainstorm, and where all had been so arid and so dry, were boiling, seething cauldrons of muddy waters; great seams were washed into the steep banks above us on one side and below us on the other. The rain came down in torrents, forming streams of rocks and earth and yellow water. A patter on the top of our coach brought forth from a fellow passenger from the icy north that "it must be hailing." Someone who knew better told us the hail consisted of rocks carried down the mountain side by the heavy downpour. Everyone in our Pullman grew conversational. Many faces wore anxious looks, thinly concealed by pale and sickly smiles and jests. Hanging on the side of the mountain practically by our "eyebrows" for miles, was perfectly all right on the narrow road-bed as long as it was dry, but when rocks were coming down on top

of the coach, almost deafening us, and wash-outs in the road-bed were leaving gaps, which the rails were spanning, it was not quite so all right.

Finally, we reached a place where there were several tracks and some "sidings"—a restful feeling to see a little level ground after miles of perpendicular walls and steep precipices in such a deluge.

Ours was the fifth train stalled at this point, as it had become impassable ahead. Then came the glad tidings that a trainload of men had been sent out to repair the damage. After a delay of five hours, how we crept over the temporary repairs and, figuratively speaking, held our breath while we did! Oh, the swirling, angry, resistless torrent below us—how tiny and puny man and his greatest forces appear by comparison with those of old Mother Nature when she deigns ever so small a glimpse of her might!

On the other side were three hundred men who had worked five solid hours to make it possible for us to pass over a place probably not over thirty or forty feet wide!

From whence sprang human egotism? The *less* we know, the more we think we know. The *more* we know, the wider grows our mental horizon. The more it widens the more we can see how little the best of our knowledge really is, until at last, the wisest among us discovers that he practically knows nothing whatever.

I imagine that the Infinite God has nothing to fear from the mental encroachments made by man, however

Wallace and Billy at Home in Hollywood

long, speeding Time ahead of him may be, or however much he may profit by the progress made by the best of his predecessors.

Here I was in Sunny California, in a torrential rain. I ran for the shelter of the crowded waiting room. Wallace was no where to be seen, but Dorothy found me and we were soon on the way to their home.

Down the stairs came the French juvenile governess with a blond haired boy of four, so much like Wallace at that age, it was the turning back of Time!

"I love you, Bertha," he said solemnly. This touched me, while it rather took my breath away. Wallace, poor boy, had expected to meet me at Barstow and motor in. He had planned this little surprise and expected to be present to enjoy my astonishment, knowing my wonted dignity. There being some confusion about his getting away from "location" at Barstow, spoiled all his plans and the boy's disappointment was very keen; but I was glad that my coming meant so much to him.

It was about two weeks before he could really get home. For that entire time, it rained continuously night and day, so that for two weeks I had not been outside the door, much less off the place.

When Wallace came, he asked me if I did not feel the "thrill" of California—the "bigness" of everything.

"—!—?—!"

I was there in time for the family Christmas tree, or rather three trees, for Wallace was just as fond of a Christmas tree, as in his own childhood days.

There was a Christmas dinner with guests. But as they were all strangers to me, I can only remember Wanda Hawley and husband, because she was so wonderful to me throughout my stay. They were frequent callers, for Wanda is a fine musician and her husband played pool and golf and went hunting with Wallace, of which sports, with polo, Wallace was very fond.

Another guest was Adela Rodgers (Mrs. St. John) who was very clever, having a daily article in the Hearst paper there, the Los Angeles Examiner, a warm friend of Dorothy's and a remarkably bright young woman.

During the day, packages arrived,—Christmas gifts done up in fancy boxes, tissue paper, Santa Claus stickers, holly and ribbons,—just the same as any where else in the country. Friends dropped in in the evening and chatted, sang and played, and told about their presents,—told who were ill and who were spending the holidays in the country, very much as they would in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, or Evanston, Illinois. Most of them had been to the church of his or her respective faith in the morning. They talked children and knitting and golf and moving pictures, and altogether it struck me as almost dull.

Wallace loved cars, as you all know. He struggled so earnestly and so patiently to be granted a racing driver's license. It came.

Wallace was so pleased and so happy that he wore the pin night as well as day, for it was the dearest wish of his heart to enter the auto races at Indianapolis the following summer.

But in this Wallace was doomed to bitter disappointment, as the firm held his life too valuable for any such risk, and would not permit it.

One enormous man, six feet six inches tall, and weighing all of three hundred pounds, was a frequent caller, who impressed one as a wholesome, clean living man. He and Billy were great chums.

He has since proved himself a true blue friend, for it was he who offered his blood in an endeavor to save Wallace's life, for which I shall be eternally grateful to him. They call him affectionately, "Buddy Post," and as I never heard him called anything else, I too needs must write him down as "Buddy Post," adding from my innermost heart—God bless you, "Buddy Post."

Again I met the well groomed gentleman with the furtive look. Some one whispered to me his misfortune. After this I could see the indescribable evidence of a condition not wholly normal. If questioned as to things specific, I could never have answered, for they are evanescent, intangible, potent. Poor young man, may he retreat before he reaches the brink.

The "hopeless case" came one night, and for his father's sake, Wallace aided him. He borrowed thirty or forty dollars and one of Wallace's fine pistols. As he departed, he said he meant to commit suicide. The threat was not new so it was not startling. He departed with the money and the gun. He spent the money and pawned the gun.

He presumably over-indulged in his particular brand of dissipation and called up the house at the

very considerate time of 2:30 A. M. and rang for one half hour. I could not sleep for the ringing. I slipped down to the telephone and removed the receiver from the hook without inquiring who the presumptuous one could be. I never saw the man in person but he was pointed out to me in one of the moving pictures. Poor gaunt shadow of a human being,—a tragedy in the making.

The two above mentioned, were the only abnormal people who ever came there to my knowledge, during my three months' stay.

Many, many apparently perfectly healthy sane and otherwise normal persons, came and went.

Every night Wallace stopped in my room for a chat and to kiss me good night ,no matter what the hour, and how glad and grateful I am that he never failed to come.

Of evenings, from a dozen to thirty or more people would "run in" to see the pictures. There was a quart bottle of liquor on a table with glasses, ice water and cigarettes,—also a ten pound box of candy. People were invited to "help themselves." It was a very rare occasion when a fresh bottle was brought. It seems to me that a quart bottle distributed among so many people, could not possibly intoxicate any of them.

One evening a man came there under the influence of liquor, whose domestic troubles were presumably the cause. He was listened to with patience, and gently conducted to his car, it having been suggested

that he go home and to bed, and to come some other evening,—and he docilely did as he was told.

Wallace was working very hard the entire time I was there. In the three months, "Across the Continent," "Nice People" and "The Dictator" were made, and I remember that once, just one-half day elapsed between the time Wallace's work in one picture was finished and the work in the following one begun.

Wallace gave orders for the "boys" to drive for me, whenever I wished, so with three of them on the place, I had some wonderful motor trips through the different canyons, over fine wide boulevards, out to Santa Monica and other Pacific coast resorts. Wanda Hawley took her husband's mother, a friend of her own, and myself to see the old Mission at Santa Barbara and several other long trips.

Mr. Hawley's mother, a resident of Albany was called East. Wanda came to say that she would be glad to take me any where I would like to go; but I had just received a telegram calling me home,—that my mother was very ill.

With friends, I motored to San Diego. We went over to the Coronado Hotel and motored into Old Mexico, Tia Juana, to the races.

I met a class mate and formed many charming acquaintances and friendships, among those not connected with the industry, and some who were.

One of the latter I had known as a little girl of ten when she had played a wistful lonely waif and I had directed rehearsals. I wrote her and she had not forgotten me. She wrote me the dearest letter inviting

me to spend the afternoon with her to "talk over old times." She was just as sweet and unspoiled as when a little girl. She was none other than the present, permanent and incomparable little darling of the whole world,—just as my boy was, before he went away—Mary Pickford!

One night at Wallace's, her picture, "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was run, and Wallace could not enthuse over her art or her charm enough, alternately exclaiming "great"!! and "God love her!!" My heart echoed in the words of,—I think it was Sammy Weller—"them's my sentiments,"—"God love her."

California had grown fair and life seemed rosy and the sun bright and warm. My boy was so successful, so joyous, ruddy, so well and strong. Strong? I will leave you to judge. One night "Buddy Post" was there and unawares, he picked Wallace up and carried him the length of the room. Wallace began to imitate a crying child who needed to be soothed. "Buddy Post" put him down at the end of the long room. Wallace instantly picked up "Buddy Post", his six feet six inches and his three hundred pounds, and carried him back to the starting point. Then, surprise of surprises, Dorothy took Wallace on her back, (back to back), balanced herself and carried him thus, the same distance. She is little, but—oh my!

One day we were informed that a Dr. Starr was to become a house guest for ten days or two weeks, sleeping with, and to be every moment with my big, powerful, stalwart boy, with his ruddy out-of-door complexion and his carefree boyish spirit.

It seemed such an unnecessary indignity, to me. There was so much mystery about it all.

Wallace was advised to be disagreeable to the man. I took the liberty of advising him to treat him as a gentleman, and as a house guest should be treated so long as he so conducted himself. If not, he should be escorted from the premises.

Wallace comes from old Virginia stock, that holds a guest sacred while under the protection of the host's roof-tree, and anything but courtesy would be an unpardonable breach of hospitality.

Dr. Starr proved worthy the highest respect, and when they parted, it was with mutual regret.

When Dr. Starr reported to the firm, who had selected him for his unimpeachable integrity, he gave my son a perfectly clean "bill-of-health" entirely exonerating him from the aspersions, coming from some mysterious source.

During his stay, Wallace was to appear at a benefit for a crippled children's Hospital, and Wallace coached Billy before they started. Wallace was to put a twenty dollar gold piece in Billy's pocket, then when they went upon the stage and Wallace had addressed the audience, he was to turn to Billy saying, "old man, what are you going to do for them?" and Billy was to start the contribution by handing up the twenty dollar gold piece.

When Wallace came home and made himself comfortable for the evening, he very much disliked to go out again,—and did not—except for such a reason as the above.

There was a stranger whom I had not seen before, but he happened to have known them all for some time. He remained to dinner and went over in the car. It seemed, some committee had failed to notify this theatre and no arrangements had been made until after Wallace had come, found this situation, and had left, much annoyed and disgusted.

The man who had been to dinner, frightened Mrs. Reid, with the usual admonition not to betray her informant, how terribly Wallace had driven home, at the risk of Billy's and everybody else's life.

I would have respected the man's courage and veracity, if he had spoken in the husband's presence. The fact that he had just "broken bread" at Wallace's table and did not wish to be quoted, awakened my contempt for the man, and earned my complete disbelief in his word.

I asked Dr. Starr how the drive had been. He replied that Wallace drove fast,—which was his custom,—that he drove carelessly was *not true;* that he was annoyed, yes, and justly so. I told him what the stranger had said. Dr. Starr in turn was annoyed, and as Wallace at that minute came into the room, Dr. Starr at once told him of the incident in my presence, which I ratified,—whereupon Wallace told the fellow he could no longer consider him a friend, so he could not welcome him as a guest.

This incident I tell here, for the same reason that I told it to Dr. Starr, to show just how far from the truth a gossiping, conscienceless man or woman can go, how a perfectly innocent action can be distorted

into most any shape by persons maliciously inclined, because the trend of the mind is malicious.

Exaggeration can describe a tame house cat into a Tiger, an angle worm into a Boa-constrictor. When a man stands high in public esteem and his fate rests on the gossamer of popularity, it behooves him to be more than careful of the kind of persons he permits within the sacred precincts of his home.

A man can barricade his house from the enemy without, but woe betide the self deluded, over confidingly foolish man, who too trustingly permits the enemy to gain a foothold within his doors, by fawning, sycophantish cunning and hypocracy,—under the cloak of affection or friendship.

A man or woman cannot possibly be safe from the enemy within the castle of his home, for there he sees not the necessity for vigilance,—so it is all too easy to strike him down at once, or destroy him by degrees.

Slander is a many headed monster, which too many are only too pleased to entertain, unconscious of the danger.

Wallace was too trusting. He was so open minded and free from tricks and intrigue himself, that he did not recognize it when he brushed against it, even within the all too hospitable walls of his home.

Let him who runs, read riddles as he may, but Wallace stood "at ease" in his own home, so that he did not know, even when he stumbled over it in his own hallway.

Poor boy it is beautiful to have faith, but it is rash, when it embraces every body!! Let a man do

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his own thinking if he reasonably expects a modicum of safety in this world, so set with pitfalls and snares.

Wallace was too prone to shirk thinking when it came to the things of every day. Perhaps the day-by-day things may be drab, but beneath the drab are often hidden, the cleverest snares!

# CHAPTER XV.

## BILLY AND BETTY.

As I have so often said, Wallace adored children. Billy was his idol.

Returning from New York, after the taking of the Peter Ibbetson picture, instead of shipping it through, he took the greatest pleasure in *carrying* out there, a "great big" boat, to be run with electric batteries, for Billy's "s-'prise",— which had cost him forty-eight dollars, for a four-year-old to run on the swimming pool back of the house!

Billy had a fleet of smaller boats, but I think the grown up child had really more pleasure in anticipation of the time he and Billy would have together, launching it.

I carried out there, in my trunk, among the Christmas gifts for Billy, a little submarine which, when wound up, would dive and finally come to the surface again. It had only cost me four dollars and a half,— and to the day I started East, Billy wound it up every night of his life and watched it submerge and rise, in the bath-tub, when getting ready for his bath. The big boat lay out in the rain and sun, and I never did see him play with it.

Wallace loved to go up to the nursery and hear Billy's prayers. The more children that nursery con-

tained, the better pleased he would have been. He would have loved their childish prattle and scampering footsteps through the house.

As a boy, he often spoke of the big old "homestead" for the large family of children he meant to have. From childhood up, he would often say to me, "Mamma, why wasn't I born twins, so's I could have a little brother to play with?"

The childhood of an "only child" is lonely, however many playmates they may have. He felt that loneliness and he felt that Billy must feel it too.

Billy was now five years old and "all boy." Wallace especially wanted a daughter, so that when Dorothy found little Betty and brought her home, Wallace received her with open arms and heart and fell desperately in love with her forthwith. Could it be wondered, as pretty as a picture, the dainty coloring of flower petals, soft and trusting little arms about his neck and a warm little heart that was his at sight.

Oh, the power of a baby's fingers on the parental face and throat, the soft cheek and the loving kisses free from self, how beguiling, how enthralling. These tender confiding caresses forge bonds of steel to lead any man upward toward the pure light of noble living, toward the heaven whence these frail and potent little ones have so recently descended to earth for the salvation of man.

Betty's influence was tremendous and Wallace was impelled to root out all things tending to harm the butterfly down, the fairy plumage that clothes uncon-

scious innocence with such appealing loveliness and resistless power!

Her new found "Daddy" began to make some resolutions. The odor of a cocktail, however faint, was not nice, blown on the little human flower.

In my three month's stay, I never saw Wallace under the influence of liquor; but what he did drink, was seriously affecting his stomach, and what wonder with the synthetic liquors of the present era.

King Billy was at first rebellious and objected to this usurper of his throne. But his "Daddy" and Mother assured him that no one could dethrone him, that he was only to make room on the seat beside him and that now he had a dear little sister to play with and protect.

Then the frowns vanished, smiles broke through the clouds. Billy and Betty were joyous, parents looked on smiling their happiness over their new found treasure and all was serene and the road ahead looked broad and smooth, bordered on either side with peace, prosperity and happy security.

Rumors there were, but Hollywood is composed of rumors from within and is a shining target for rumors from without, even to the farther most end of the earth,—but ninety per cent of these rumors are as pure fiction as the stories wrought into their pictures. However, there is the ten per cent of truth, like a smoldering fire brand, which sends out the ninety per cent of this smoke of fiction, which the breath of many headed Slander, fans into a mighty conflagration, carrying down structures which it had taken life times

of toil, sacrifice and ambition to build, leaving dead ashes where had been the shining light of well earned Fame, in whose joy-giving light, millions had been bathed and made happy.

Fame builds, but Slander is ever in the shadow, awaiting with eternal vigilance, an opportunity to apply her fire brand.

Billy and Betty now romped ahead, drawing after them with flower bedecked and jingling laughter-bells, on reins of steel wrought of Love, their parents, Wallace and Dorothy,—in sweet and willing bondage.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## CHALLENGE TO MORTAL COMBAT—THE TITANIC STRUGGLE.

Simply as an hypothesis, granting the possibility of ten per cent truth founded upon the articles of every description broad-casted over the land, from which emanated the ninety per cent of all pervading intangible "smoke",—

Before proceeding further, I think a few words of explanation of the three thousand miles between myself and my son at such a time, are due me.

Wallace's Aunt Nell and myself moved into town December first. Just before I closed my country house, I saw a small item in one of the papers saying my son's eyes had been injured by the Klieg lights, that there was danger of permanent blindness, that the shock had shaken his nerves and that he was at home ill, attended by trained nurses. This frightened me terribly, as I had not been notified that anything was wrong.

I wired immediately, "in mercy" to tell me the exact truth. The reply came,—

"Condition much improved—no cause for worry. Starting today for ten day motor trip. Ignore all rumors. Love from all"—(signed) Wallace and Dorothy.

*"Ignore all rumors"*,—this reassured me, for who should know the truth better than they?

From the day I left his home until he could no longer write or send me word, Wallace's constant urge was for me to return to his home to live permanently. Anent the cordial relationship existing between them all and me. Just after my return came a letter from Dorothy's mother, from which I quote,—

"I was so very glad to hear from you, the house is not the same without you."—"Wallace told me he *missed you very much,* he has told a lot of people so."

I had a letter from Wallace on May 15, saying,—"hope this summer will see you settle, sell and finish there,—and any way, here's where you should be."

Here in the East, were my mother, eighty-four and my two sisters. I was torn between them. I determined to so arrange my affairs that I could go to Wallace the first of February, and be with my family here in the summer time.

On August 15, I had a letter from Dorothy's mother, Mrs. Davenport, who wrote for herself and them, as they were both so occupied. "Our children well and happy. Wally has the desire to invest his money now, and it all came through you dear,—how can Wallace have such a wonderful mother and not follow in her footsteps. I do miss you and I'm praying you will come back to us soon."

Newspaper articles, followed by more telegrams from me, and replies.

Mrs. Davenport wrote me October 26.

"I was so upset at your telegram. I was so afraid the false reports would reach you. He has been quite sick but not in any danger, although we feared he would lose his sight. He will be better than he has been in three years."

Then again she wrote October 31.

"Wally grows stronger every day and goes back to work in two weeks. The reports were all wrong. We did not realize that you would get them. He will look better than he has in three years. The reports were just killing him,—but its all over, thank God. Now we can rejoice. He will write when he is able. His eyes are not right yet, but they will be in time. They are going out at least twice a week to nice places together. I'm very happy that things look so bright."

Another dated November 13. "The children (Wallace and Dorothy) are in Oakland for a day or two en route. Wally is gaining fast.—P. S. Nothing to worry about *now*."

December 10.—"Poor Wally had a relapse and he can't go to work for two or three weeks yet, but we hope all will be well in a few days. I'll keep you posted. He is not in danger. He was better today. As soon as the dysentery stops he will begin to gain. His face is like a *kid's now*. He looks twenty-two. He gains quickly, so don't worry. The worst is past. You will be proud of your son soon. I shall miss you Xmas, for I learned to love you, you were so just and sweet and wise."

Below, I give an exact copy of a letter I wrote Wallace just before the New Year, which speaks for

itself, as to how little I knew of Wallace's true condition, and I believe, that to the very last, those at his bedside, doctors, nurses and family expected nothing but his ultimate recovery.

As for myself, nothing could have been farther from my thoughts, than his—going away from us—with his youth and fundimentally powerful constitution and every possible care and skill.

(COPY)

916 West End Avenue.
New York City, December 29, 1922.

Boy Darling!

You cannot imagine how glad I am that you are better, and I pray God with my whole heart that you will regain in full, your former magnificent health. Remember dear heart, that it is God who gives us the fine, the worth-while and truly good things in life, and the most priceless of these is good health. When you get it back in full you will know better how to treasure and guard it, in the future. There is but one who has the legitimate right to take toll of your health, and that is old Father Time. All others are marauders, fiendish robbers, so my darling poor sick child, please beware of all such, no matter in what guise they come.

You will never know the suffering and grief it has caused me, to learn that you were so ill, and I so far away and powerless to come to you. But thank God

you are getting along so fine! Now my sweetheart, please believe in Almighty God, a just and loving Father. Just remember my dear, that if you punish Billy,—it is not for the pleasure of inflicting pain; but because you *love* him that you are sufficiently interested to want to see him as near perfect as is humanly possible. You see other people's children doing wrong,—you do *not* punish them, you forget that they did wrong,—for want of a parent's love for them. The parent's love and guidance of a child is just the one drop of parental love, a replica of the infinite ocean of love of the Infinite Father.

Hunt up an old hymn and pause to absorb its meaning. I always felt that there was something about it that placed, or led the adult human child into a better understanding of himself and of the Infinite Parent, to whom he is ultimately indebted for his being.

The Past is gone; let it go, and be not discouraged. Be of good cheer! With that fine brain of yours, which you have kept too long "marking time," do a little leisurely introspecting, and then begin *observing* the things that go on *immediately about you,* and above all, *weigh* the *people* who come and go in your home, your social relations and your business. Weigh *clearly, justly,* and do not fear to face facts as they *are,* and not as it is pleasant to *imagine* they are. Clear out the leeches, for they are many. Don't put crutches under lazy and ambitionless people who have no claims upon you. Many, men in particular, came to your home with plausible "tales of woe," playing upon your sympathies and bleeding your purse to the point almost

of exhaustion, who are amply able to stand upon their own feet and earn their own way if they no longer had the easier way of drawing upon your resources. Some speak of them as false friends; that is altogether too mild a term. They are leeches who are also *enemies, envious* because you *can* pander to their worthlessness and idleness. *"Clean house"* of such.

I spoke of some of the events I saw there, and as an outsider and stranger among them, silently observing —I could have helped a little if you had just given me the opportunity I so often asked. I wanted so much the opportunity to have an old-fashioned talk with you, that we both liked so much in the olden days, for we both met, open to conviction and willing that each other's views should be submitted to the crucible of unbiased logic. Then we could always reach some useful conclusions, and it *does aid* one so much to think *clearly,* and to "stop, look and listen" at the danger points along life's winding and devious way.

I do wish you could come here to a change of environment. See a few real plays, go to the Metropolitan, for grand opera is very enriching to the soul and feeding to the better intellect—and just take a vacation from the old surroundings, associates, habits of thought, etc. It would be of untold benefit to you. When you are able, have Dorothy "bundle you up" and bring you.

What I have said to you is with a wealth of love in my heart for you. You have never taken time to really get acquainted with your mother. I really be-

His "Vacant Chair," — Wallace Reid, B.P.O.E.

lieve, if you did, it would do you a world of good, and find the prescription pleasant, too.

*Just because*—it is nearly New Year when wise people "take stock" of themselves.

Lots and lots of love and earnest prayers. They *count*, even if you are not sure they do. *Get well, dear!* Love to all.

Lovingly,
Mother Bertha.

*December* 31.

"Wally is now out of danger,"—explanations about articles.

Mrs. Davenport wrote me, which I received January 15.

"Wally is improving every day and he hopes to be back at work in six weeks. I wish you and the family would write letters he can read. He is shown nothing."

January 18, the following telegram about six or seven o'clock in the evening:

"The boy simply slept away. Died at one o'clock today. Our hearts are together.

"Dorothy."

Not until all was over, did I learn the real truth about his condition insofar as any one human could know.

He fought bravely back and forth like the brave hero that he was. He suffered, suffered, suffered excruciating agonies of insomnia and pain, but he never for one moment, considered surrender—to his his everlasting glory be it said!

He died fighting—what more could a brave soldier do?

One bitter regret will go down into the grave with me—that I could not be at his bedside to hold his hand, to be of some little service to comfort him, for had I not cared for him and tried to guide his first faltering footsteps before he could stand alone—to go out from me to brave the world?

Had I not brought him here, and was it not my right to be beside him when he—went out—to brave Eternity?—when he went away—for the last time!!

# CHAPTER XVII.

## A HERO, VICTORIOUS, ENTERS THE LAND OF GLORY.

When he went away—for the LAST TIME!!—echoes and re-ëchoes in my empty heart, while the storm of unshed tears beats against its darkened windows, deluging it in sorrow—deep and hope-crushing sorrow!! Like lightning flashes, warm and kindly human sympathy penetrates this hidden storm of grief and hopelessness, shines in for a brief moment with beneficence and is gone—and all is blackest darkness again. The poor storm-tossed mother heart feels shattered beyond repair, the wounded spirit within lies crushed and bleeding—Hope-abandoned.

Echoing and re-ëchoing through its empty chambers, the dirge—three thousand terrible miles away—his nearest of this earth—his mother! could not be with her own, her only one, to send him out upon the Unknown Voyage, with loving, brave smiles—with courage-giving handclasps, with love-laden wordless prayers and blessings—as his spirit takes its first step beyond this new strange mile-stone on Eternity's broad Highway—three thousand miles between! Oh, the Requiem!

Oh, the long, dark way! through the impenetrable darkness!—"Oh Lead Kindly Light."

Turn to thy God, thou torn and broken spirit—hide thou in the shelter of His Bosom—and be healed!

* * * * *

Light of Heaven shines through the Darkness of Despair and melts from my spirit's vision, the scales of self-clinging.

He faced Himself and They held a mighty conference. They looked into the Awesome countenance of Truth. Unterrified, They left the flower-strewn pathway of youth, prosperity, adulation, greater honors ahead. They tore off the rosy-hued glasses of Easy Indulgence and looked with clear vision ahead up the rugged narrow road full of many obstacles to be overcome, pitfalls to be avoided. They had set themselves a mighty task, but with full knowledge of every danger ahead and every battle to be fought of soul-destroying Temptation, cunningly concealed beneath innumerable, enticing and beauty-bedecked disguises armed with a thousand plausible excuses clothed in "sound" Logic.

They were told of countless Pitfalls where they would be least expected, in which dwelled hideous dragons, so clever, They would think them beautiful and alluring until the powerful, Too Late, seized them from behind and bound them fast, when the hideousness of the Wooer suddenly would be revealed. There were wily, poison-laden reptiles and myriad other snares to entangle the unwary.

With full knowledge, They chose the Rugged Road. Abreast, dauntless of courage, and determined of spirit, They started the steep climb, my brave-souled Wallace and his other self, his Conscience. So long

as They remained true to each other and continued abreast, there would be nothing upon the dangerous road that could harm them, for They would be unconquerable generals in command of all before them, so long as They were in command of THEMSELVES.

They knew that there was one particularly dangerous place, near the journey's end, where the road divided into two, and there sat a stern judge, whose power it was to determine which road they must take, *or else turn back!*

They also knew that just before arriving at this division of the Road, that there was a by-path, leading back to the Primrose Path, the Easy Way. This, They could take, if They so chose.

There was no appeal from this stern judge's decision, for while They labored up the Rugged Road, the stern judge looked deep into the Book of the Past; then he perused the bulletins as issued by the Future—as to their best field of endeavor if one path were assigned—or where their talents were to be used if perchance it should be the other. There is no appeal, for as strange as it may seem They, these two, always have the controlling vote for the selection of this judge, as is written in the Book of the Past.

The Road to the left was level and led to Every Day Life under much improved spiritual housing and probably material gains. The other Road led down into the Valley of the Shadow. At the end was a great black arch above which was inscribed "Mystic Portal," and it was hung with black curtains, impenetrable, immovable—except as the Travellers shall reach it,

when at a signal, skeleton hands draw aside the sombre curtains to admit the new inhabitant. They also knew that when those sombre curtains closed behind them, They never more could come back to earth to dwell. At the Portal, They must leave the Garment of Flesh, for in this new country Flesh is too burdensome, too confining a shell—to which They had so tenaceously clung. When They had "shed" this shell, They were surprised that the people of earth so ardently clung to it.

Another strange thing had happened. Wallace and his companion, Conscience, on this fateful journey, had become ONE.

Arrayed in shining garments, myriads of shining ones bade him welcome with joyous acclaim, and such music as he had never conceived, in volume, quality and wondrous harmony!!

He knew he had played many mimic heroes on earth—then this mimic hero grew ill. When this mimic hero had dissolved into the real hero in shining garments and an ovation such as he had never known on earth—

He did not understand.

"I am only a make-believe hero, I deserve no such honors as these, for they are real and belong only to a real hero worthy of this high honor."

"All others were 'make-believe,' but your Last Role was that of a True Hero. Not one who led conquering hosts, but one who, without the thrill of flaring trumpets and beating drums with others to die in your stead, you raised arms against that most unconquer-

able human foe—SELF-INDULGENCE and laid your own life down for this conquest."

All were eager to do him homage. "All Hail—Well done, thou good and faithful!!!"

My boy was crowned with the laurel wreath of Victory, Self Victory, the bravest and most welcome of all in the beautiful Land of Glory!!

* * * * *

Kneeling, reverently, tenderly, his mother lays this little chaplet of love's flowers on the dear Memory of her boy Wallace, and, dear Public who loved him, in the very center—if you look—you will find her Heart.

BERTHA WESTBROOK REID.

## A FEW EXCERPTS FROM THE HOST OF LETTERS OF SYMPATHY FROM HIS MYRIAD ADMIRERS:

**Cleveland, Ohio.** "I would be willing to pay any price for a picture of dear Wallace Reid. He was my only idol. No one can take his place in the movie world."—(young girl).

**Cleveland, Ohio.** "He is placed in my memory book as one of the heroes of our century, died as nobly as 'our boys' did in France—the sympathy of a girl who so admired the clean, strong manhood and fatherhood of your 'Wally'! "—(young girl).

**Portland, Maine.** "I am one of the many thousands who mourn with you in the loss of your beloved son, Wallace. Now that his sad end has come, I have no desire to attend a movie, for none can take his place in my admiration. I had prayed each night for his recovery and I am now praying for his happiness with God."—(young girl).

**New York City.** "In your great sorrow, our hearts go out to you, as indeed, the whole world. It seems a sacrifice was required, and as Fate has fixed it, you are called upon to give it through your son. If you are an instrument in His hands for the betterment of the world, then surely you are honored before all women. Take comfort from the fact all seems genuine sympathy, love and admiration for the boy's supreme effort; but from my experience, I realize it is hard to kiss the rod that chastens!"—(a middle-aged man).

**New Orleans.** "As a mother, sympathy impels me to send the enclosed editorial. In our household, your son was a favorite first, last and always and with us there is a genuine sorrow at his going away."—(a mother).

**Ravenna, Ohio.** "What could be greater than the joy of a mother who has raised such a loved one as our friend Wally was, and to know that the world grieves as the soul of a mother would grieve, if such were possible. Tonight I am alone in the house with a dull newspaper print of Wally's picture on my desk. That clean smile of his has asked me, 'Are you doing right—are you all your mother would have you?'—and has caused cold tears to flow freely. Not because my favorite actor has gone for his reward, but because of the curse of humanity that was its cause. The crime of poison booze, drugs and all the horrible things which make the mind tremble with fear for the generations to come. I am only twenty-two years old, but that smile of Wally's has given me an aspect on life very much different than heretofore. I've seen some of the pitfalls and deep in my heart I know my mother worries for my guidance. But Wally has been my example. He was a character of which a mother would be proud and I am sure he is at the throne of Christ when he says that my inner self should do best. He conquered. I can. Wisdom is knowing wrong. Skill is knowing how to overcome it. And Virtue is overcoming it. Wally is good, and may we meet where crime is unknown and the fiends of temptation are bared. God's blessing from a Wally supporter and one who hopes to meet him later because of a clean life, as the result of a smile."—(a young boy).

**New York City.** "I have long held Mr. Reid as my screen idol. I feel his death as if he were a member of my family. I am sure Mr. Reid will be rewarded in heaven for the enjoyment and happiness he has given countless thousands. I am only a fifteen-year-old school boy, but if there is anything that I can do to be of service to you, I shall be more than happy to do it. You have great reason to be proud of a son who has made the great fight, which few have the courage to make."—(a boy of fifteen).

**New York City.** "That dear child has placed before the world a shining example of courage and determination, which few can boast of in this life. Wallace has gone into the Light and I am hoping that his bright spirit is rejoicing in its freedom."—(elderly lady).

**New York City.** "I have read in a local newspaper that you are properly grieved over the publicity given by the newspapers to the unfortunate cause of your son's death. As one of the 'public' who greatly admired his work and the genial personality back of it, even though I am a complete stranger to you, allow me to extend to you my sincere sympathy. And to also assure you that this same 'public' of which I am one, is paying little or no attention to such cheap journalism—but that rather, is there genuine sorrow at his going and entire sympathy for him in what must have been a heroic fight. The pleasure which he gave to thousands after the day's work, in the moving picture theatres, is what he is being remembered for by the really appreciative 'public.' My only regret is that you cannot hear personally the conversations about him in the elevated, the subways and in neighborhood shops. Even our local theatre in announcing his last picture, "Thirty Days," advertised him as the 'best beloved, lamented star.' In closing, I beg your pardon for intruding at such a time, but it seemed a small way in which I could partly repay the pleasure Wallace Reid gave to me personally, in his work."—(a lady).

**Pennsylvania.** "Millions of people throughout the world are mourning. The passing of the ever-loved 'Wallie' will not soon be forgotten by those who loved him for his clean acting and noble character. He gave the best that was in him to us, and now the smiling countenance shall no more be welcomed on the silver sheet by his vast following. His death has caused a pall of gloom over the whole world. The people who loved him in life are saying a silent prayer for him now."—(a lady).

**Los Angeles.** "Bertha, my dear friend, I wish I could put my arms around you and hold you close, and let my tears mingle with yours. We are both mothers, and we have known each other since childhood. The language of love and sympathy is not always spoken in words. I was in great anguish for you until I read the brave, beautiful statement you gave to the press. In that I recognized with rejoicing that your soul had found its clue, its light to follow. With your fine mind to sustain you, life cannot be desolate hereafter. You will go forward encouraged, because God has given you such unusual triumphs, such keen joys. You have been constantly in our thoughts these two weeks past; and there is a silent handclasp from each of my family in this letter. God bless you and keep you."—(a class-mate).

**New York City.** "I do not believe it was for nothing that he came into the world so wonderful a TYPE, and one who could so perfectly portray the ideals of the crusaders of old. People should know always how he looked, and what his life stood for. And I have a conviction unshakable, that his spirit will be at work, MORE EFFECTUALLY for what has happened than it could had he been left here. He is ON LOCATION working on a much bigger picture!!"—(a lady).

**Brooklyn.** "Please accept the writer's deep and understanding sympathy, and endeavor to be comforted in the knowledge that in less than half the span of normal life, your son endeared himself to all the people, from the humblest to the most exalted, and that he still lives and will continue to live in the hearts and memories of all."—(a man of mature years).

**New Jersey.** "I was very sorry to hear of the death of 'Our Wallace.' He will be missed."—(a little cripple).

**San Francisco, Cal.** "The mother of a grown son said to me, 'I never miss a Wally Reid picture. I love to see him. He always makes me happier.' Gifted with a won-

derful personality, he is everybody's friend. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' I think your son made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of his fellow-men, a martyr to principle. He gave the world all the joy and friendship and courage and faith in his power for many years, and then he gave the greatest gift of all—himself—in a fiercely fought and gloriously won battle. Not only in America, but in other countries they loved him, too, and **always will,** and mourn with us all here now. Naive, playful, the soul of a boy in the body of a giant. Irresponsible, carefree, gentle-hearted, forgiving. With malice toward none, and limitless charity for all—Wallace Reid. The world is a fairer, lovelier place for us all to live in and the path to the Garden of God, plainer and the distance to everlasting joy and peace many weary miles less because God lent us your gifted, gladsome, loving lad for a little while. He is not dead, he is just away with a cheery smile and a wave of the hand. He has wandered on to a far-away land and left us wondering how fair it must be since he lingers there."—(a mother).

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